

MARLBOROUGH
HIS LIFE AND TIMES

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SAVROLA

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FIELD FORCE

THE RIVER WAR

LONDON TO LADYSMITH

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LIFE OF LORD RANDOLPH
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THE AFTERMATH

THE EASTERN FRONT

MY EARLY LIFE: A ROVING
COMMISSION

THOUGHTS AND ADVENTURES



JOHN, DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH

By permission of Earl Spencer

Fr.

MARLBOROUGH

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

By

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
WINSTON S. CHURCHILL C.H. M.P.

VOLUME I



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TO
THE GRENADIER GUARDS
FORMERLY "THE 1ST GUARDS,"
IN WHICH JOHN CHURCHILL,
AFTERWARDS DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH,
RECEIVED HIS FIRST COMMISSION ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1667,
OF WHICH HE WAS COLONEL FROM THE YEAR 1704 TO 1711
AND FROM 1714 TILL HIS DEATH,
AND WHICH SERVED UNDER HIM AT THE BATTLES OF
THE SCHELLENBERG, BLenheim, RAMILLIES, OUDENARDE,
AND MALPLAQUET,
AND IN ALL THE PRINCIPAL SIEGES AND OTHER
GREAT OPERATIONS
DURING TEN VICTORIOUS CAMPAIGNS,
THIS WORK IS DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR
IN MEMORY OF
THE COURTESIES AND KINDNESS
SHOWN TO HIM BY THE REGIMENT IN
THE GREAT WAR

PREFACE

THERE are few successful commanders," says Creasy, "on whom Fame has shone so unwillingly as upon John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough." I believe this is true; and it is an interesting historical study to examine the causes which have made so great a contrast between the glory and importance of his deeds and the small regard of his countrymen for his memory. He commanded the armies of Europe against France for ten campaigns. He fought four great battles and many important actions. It is the common boast of his champions that he never fought a battle that he did not win, nor besieged a fortress he did not take. Amid all the chances and baffling accidents of war he produced victory with almost mechanical certainty. Even when fighting in fetters and hobbles, swayed and oppressed by influences which were wholly outside the military situation, he was able to produce the same result, varying only in degree. Nothing like this can be seen in military annals. His smaller campaigns were equally crowned by fortune. He never rode off any field except as a victor. He quitted war invincible: and no sooner was his guiding hand withdrawn than disaster overtook the armies he had led. Successive generations have not ceased to name him with Hannibal and Cæsar.

Until the advent of Napoleon no commander wielded such widespread power in Europe. Upon his person centred the union of nearly twenty confederate states. He held the Grand Alliance together no less by his diplomacy than by his victories. He rode into action with the combinations of three-quarters of Europe in his hand. His comprehension of the war extended to all theatres, and his authority alone secured design and concerted action. He animated the war at sea no less than on land, and established till the present time the British naval supremacy in the Mediterranean. His

eye ranged far across the oceans, and the foundations of British dominion in the New World and in Asia were laid or strengthened as the result of his Continental policy. He was for six years not only the Commander-in-Chief of the Allies, but, though a subject, virtually master of England. He was the head of the most glorious Administration in her history, when he led Europe, saved the Austrian Empire, and broke irretrievably the exorbitant power of France. The union with Scotland was but a feature of a period in which our country made its greatest advances in world rank and fame.

In 1688 Europe drew swords in a quarrel which, with one uneasy interlude, was to last for a quarter of a century. Since the duel between Rome and Carthage there had been no such world war. It involved all the civilized peoples; it extended to every part of the accessible globe; it settled for some time or permanently the relative wealth and power, and the frontiers of almost every European state. It outlined their various inheritances to the new domains beyond the ocean. In its course it drew out, matched, and exhausted the life energies of the nations in the same way—though not, of course, with the same scientific thoroughness—as did the Great War through which we ourselves have passed. Indeed, there are other remarkable similarities between this period and the beginning of the twentieth century. There was the same peril that the supremacy of one race and culture would be imposed by military force upon all others. There was the impotence of Europe without British aid; the slow but sure acceptance by England of the challenge and the call; and the same tremendous, increasing development of British effort during the struggle.

The wars of William and Anne were no mere effort of national ambition or territorial gain. They were in essentials a struggle for the life and liberty not only of England, but of Protestant Europe. Marlborough's victorious sword established upon sure foundations the constitutional and Parliamentary structure of our country almost as it has come down to us to-day. He carried all that was best in the life-work of Oliver Cromwell and William III to an abiding

conclusion. In no world conflict have the issues, according to modern standards, been more real and vital. In none has the duty to defend a righteous cause been more compulsive upon the British nation. In none have the results been more solid, more precious, more lasting. The triumph of the France of Louis XIV would have warped and restricted the development of the freedom we now enjoy, even more than the domination of Napoleon or of the German Kaiser.

It is usually pretended that Marlborough's personal affections followed his worldly interests and changed sides and agents with them. He certainly abandoned King James, and quarrelled with King William. But apart from these two sovereigns, around whom ranged some of the supreme constitutional and religious struggles of our history, and in whose circle business of State overrode private attachments, his character shows an astonishing constancy. His romantic love for his wife Sarah during nearly fifty years of wedlock, his fidelity to the Princess and Queen he served without a break for the thirty years from 1682 to 1712, were the keynotes of his life. His main friendships and political connexions were proof against all the stresses and surprises of violent times when nothing was sure or safe. He worked in steady and mutual confidence with Halifax, Shrewsbury, Russell, and Legge for a generation. Godolphin was his close friend and ally for forty years. Death alone severed these ties. The same elements of stability and continuity marked his great period. The ten years of war, with their hazards, their puzzles, their ordeals, their temptations, only strengthened a brotherhood in arms with Prince Eugene, unmatched between captains of equal fame. Not all the wear and tear of the Grand Alliance, nor the ceaseless friction between England and Holland, disturbed his similar association with the Pensionary Heinsius. Cadogan was his Chief Staff Officer, and Cardonell his secretary through all his campaigns, and both shared his fortunes and misfortunes to the end.

Yet fame shines unwillingly upon the statesman and warrior whose exertions brought our island and all Europe safely through its perils and produced glorious results for

Christendom. A long succession of the most famous writers of the English language have exhausted their resources of reproach and insult upon his name. Swift, Pope, Thackeray, and Macaulay in their different styles have vied with one another in presenting an odious portrait to posterity. Macpherson and Dalrymple have fed them with misleading or mendacious facts.

Neither of the two historic British parties has been concerned to defend Marlborough's national action. Every taunt, however bitter; every tale, however petty; every charge, however shameful, for which the incidents of a long career could afford a pretext, has been levelled against him. He in his lifetime remained silent, offering or leaving behind him no explanation or excuse, except his deeds. Yet these have sufficed to gather around him a literature more extensive than belongs to any military commander who was not also a sovereign. Hundreds of histories and biographies have been written about him and his wife Sarah. Many have been maliciously hostile, and others have destroyed their effect through indiscriminating praise. Many more have been meritorious but unread. It is only within recent times that the new school of writers who are reconciling scientific history with literary style and popular comprehension have begun to make headway against the prejudice of two hundred years.

It is with a sense of deep responsibility that I have attempted the task of making John Churchill intelligible to the present generation. Many of his defenders have shown the highest ability and immense learning; but their voices have not prevailed against the prestige and art of his assailants. When in the closing months of his life Macaulay was challenged in his facts, in his methods, and in his bias by the brilliant but unknown Paget, he felt strong enough to treat the most searching correction and analysis with contempt. Posterity, he reflected, would read what he himself had written. His critics, if he but ignored them, would soon be forgotten. It may perhaps be so. But time is a long thing.

I hesitated about undertaking this work. But two of the most gifted men I have known urged me to it strongly.

PREFACE

Lord Balfour, with all the rare refinement of his spacious mind, cool, questioning, critical, pressed it upon me with compelling enthusiasm. Lord Rosebery said, "Surely you must write *Duke John* [as he always called him]: he was a tremendous fellow." I said that I had from my childhood read everything I came across about him, but that Macaulay's story of the betrayal of the expedition against Brest was an obstacle I could not face. The aged and crippled statesman arose from the luncheon table, and, with great difficulty but sure knowledge, made his way along the passages of The Durdans to the exact nook in his capacious working library where "Paget's Examen" reposed. "There," he said, taking down this unknown, out-of-print masterpiece, "is the answer to Macaulay."

Paget's defence of the 'Camaret Bay Letter' has been judged valid by modern opinion. As these pages will show, I could not be satisfied with it. Paget, in fact, proved that Marlborough's alleged letter betraying to the Jacobite Court the Brest expedition, could only have been written after he knew that it had been betrayed already and could do no harm. My researches have convinced me that the document purporting to be a letter is a fabrication, and that no such letter exists or ever existed. The argument upon this point occupies about four chapters of this volume. Upon this issue I join battle. I believe that the Jacobite records preserved in the Scots Jesuit College in Paris are one of the greatest frauds of history. They are nothing more than the secret service reports of Jacobite agents and spies in England. It is astounding that so many famous writers should have accepted them to traduce not merely Marlborough, but the entire generation of statesmen and warriors of William and Anne, who bore England forward in the world as she has never been borne before or since. It is an aberration of historical technique.

In a portrait or impression the human figure is best shown by its true relation to the objects and scenes against which it is thrown, and by which it is defined. I have tried to unroll a riband of English history which stretches along the reigns

of Charles II, James II, William and Mary, William III, and Anne. The riband is always of equal width. Through it runs the scarlet thread of John Churchill's life. In this volume we trace that thread often with difficulty and interruption. It slowly broadens until for a goodly lap it covers the entire history of our country and frays out extensively into the history of Europe. Then it will narrow again as time and age impose their decrees upon the human thrust. But the riband is meant to continue at its even spread.

I feel that, for one reason or another, an opportunity will be accorded to me to state in a manner which will receive consideration Marlborough's claim to a more just and a more generous judgment from his fellow-countrymen. In this work I am compelled before reaching the great period of his life to plough through years of struggle and to meet a whole host of sneers, calumnies, and grave accusations. The court is attentive, and I shall not be denied audience. It is my hope to recall this great shade from the past, and not only invest him with his panoply, but make him living and intimate to modern eyes. I hope to show that he was not only the foremost of English soldiers, but in the first rank among the statesmen of our history; not only that he was a Titan, for that is not disputed, but that he was a virtuous and benevolent being, eminently serviceable to his age and country, capable of drawing harmony and design from chaos, and one who only needed an earlier and still wider authority to have made a more ordered and a more tolerant civilization for his own time, and to help the future.

My cousin the present Duke of Marlborough has placed the Blenheim papers at my disposal. Earl Spencer and many other custodians of the treasures of the bygone years have shown me the utmost consideration. To them all I express my gratitude; also to Professor Trevelyan, who may think some sentences I have written about Macaulay a poor return for his own historical reparations. But I can faithfully declare I have sought the truth. I have profited greatly from my conversations with Mr Keith Feiling, whose authority on this period stands so high. I am much indebted to Mr M. P.

PREFACE

Ashley, who for the last four years has conducted my researches into the original manuscripts at Blenheim and Althorp, as well as in Paris, Vienna, and London, and has constantly aided me in reading and revising the text. His industry, judgment, and knowledge have led to the discovery of various errors, and also of some new facts which are not included in the current versions of Marlborough's life. We have tried to test all documents and authorities at the source; nevertheless we await with meekness every correction or contradiction which the multiply knowledge of students and critics will supply.

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

CHARTWELL

WESTERHAM

August 13, 1933

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ABBREVIATIONS

- C. = Chancery Records in the London Record Office.
C.S.P. = *Calendar of State Papers*.
C.S.P. (Dom.) = *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.
D.N.B. = *Dictionary of National Biography*.
H.M.C. = *Report of the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission*.
R.O. = The Public Record Office, London.
S.P. = State Papers.

For further details as to footnote references see the Bibliography (pp. 575-581).

In quoting from old documents and letters the original text has been preserved wherever it is significant. Letters of Marlborough and Sarah which enter directly into the narrative have been modernized in spelling, grammar, and the use of capitals.

Documents never before made public are distinguished with an asterisk (*).

METHOD OF DATING

Until 1752 dates in England and on the Continent differed owing to our delay in adopting the Reformed Calendar of Gregory XIII. The dates which prevailed in England were known as Old Style, those abroad as New Style. In the seventeenth century the difference was ten days, in the eighteenth century eleven days. For example, January 1, 1601 (O.S.), was January 11, 1601 (N.S.), and January 1, 1701 (O.S.), was January 12, 1701 (N.S.).

The method I have used is to give all dates of events that occurred in England in the Old Style, and of events that occurred abroad in New Style. In sea battles and a few other convenient cases the dates are given in both styles.

It was also customary at this time—at any rate, in English official documents—to date the year as beginning on Lady Day, March 25. What we should call January 1, 1700, was then called January 1, 1699, and so on for all days up to March 25, when 1700 began. This has been a fertile source of confusion. In this book all dates between January 1 and March 25 have been made to conform to the modern practice.

CHAPTER I
ASHE HOUSE
(1644-1661)

IN January 1644 a Devonshire lady, Eleanor (or Ellen), widow of Sir John Drake, alarmed by the Royalist activities in the West Country, had asked for a Roundhead garrison to protect her house at Ashe, near Axminster.¹ She was "of good affection" to the Parliament, had aided them with money and provisions, and had "animated her tenants in seven adjoining parishes" to adhere to their cause. The troops were sent; but before they could fortify the place Lord Poulett, a neighbour who commanded for the King, marched upon it with his Irish soldiers, drove out the Parliamentarians, burned the house, and "stripped the good lady, who, almost naked and without shoe to her foot but what she afterwards begged, fled to Lyme for safety."

Here she encountered fresh hardships. The Roundhead seaport of Lyme Regis was soon attacked by the Royal forces. Early in April Prince Maurice, with six thousand men and "an excellent artillery," laid siege to the town. The story of its resolute defence is a cameo of the Civil War. For nearly three months a primitive, fitful, fierce combat was waged along and across the meagre ramparts and ditches which protected the townsfolk. Women aided the garrison in their stubborn resistance, relieving them in their watch by night and handing up the powder and ball in action. Colonel Blake, afterwards the famous Admiral of the Commonwealth, commanded the town. He several times offered the Royalists to open a breach in his breastworks and fight out the issue face to face on a front of twenty or on a front of ten men. His leadership, and twenty-six sermons by an eloquent Puritan

¹ For this chapter see the map facing p. 214.

divine, sustained the courage of the defenders. They depended for their supplies upon the sea. From time to time ships came in sight and aroused hopes and fears in both camps.

Lady Drake was for a while in extreme distress. She must have watched the coming of ships with mingled feelings. The Royalist navy, such as it was, was commanded by her sister's grandson, James Ley, third Earl of Marlborough.¹ Every week it was rumoured that her dreaded relation would arrive from the Channel Islands with reinforcements for the enemy. But he never came. The Parliament held the seas. Only Roundhead ships appeared. Eleanor endured privations, bombardments, and burnings for nearly three months. She was for her livelihood "reduced to the spinning and knitting of stockings, in which miserable condition she continued until the siege of Lyme was raised" by the arrival of a relieving Puritan army from London under the Earl of Essex, "whereof she got away and came to Parliament."²

Her son John was no help to her in her misfortunes. We have been assured that he was "loyal to the King and on bad terms with his Puritan mother."³ But this seems incorrect. He was, on the contrary, at this time himself a prisoner of war in Prince Maurice's hands, and it was his mother who exerted herself on his behalf. Her sister, the Countess of Marlborough, stood high with the Royalists and appealed for the release of the captive. But the Parliamentary forces were now moving towards Axminster, and as the young Drake had said imprudently that he would get Lord Poulett's house burned in revenge for the burning of Ashe, his liberation was not unnaturally refused.

Lady Drake, though a resolute Puritan, continued to address herself to both sides, invoking with the Royalists her sister's, and with the Roundheads her own political merit.

¹ Wolsley calls James Ley wrongly (*Life of Marlborough*, i, 8) the second Earl of Marlborough, and rightly (ii, 64) the third Earl of Marlborough.

² This account of the activities of Eleanor, Lady Drake, is based on C.S.P. (*Compounding*), pp. 65-66, 1051-53, 1317; her petition of March 22, 1648, to the House of Lords in H.M.C., vii, 166; and A. R. Bayley, *The Great Civil War in Dorset*, p. 129. Bayley, chapter vi, gives a good description of the siege of Lyme Regis.

³ Wolsley (ii, 8) describes John Drake as a Royalist, but C.S.P. (*Compounding*), p. 866, disproves this.

On September 28, 1644, Parliament ordered "that being wholly ruined by the enemy forces, she should have a furnished house in London rent free, £100 at once and £5 a week." The Westminster Commissioners accordingly four days later selected for her the house of a Royalist gentleman then still in arms—Sir Thomas Reynell; and she remained in these quarters for nearly four years, pursuing her claims for compensation through the slowly working mills of Westminster. Sir Thomas made his peace with Parliament and 'compounded for'—that is, ransomed—his house in 1646. He demanded reinstatement, as was his right; and he complained that Lady Drake during her tenancy "had digged up the ground and pulled up the floors in search of treasure." Nevertheless she continued to reside there in his despite, and perseveringly pursued her case against Lord Poulett for the burning of Ashe; and she had sufficient credit with the now irresistible Parliamentarians to carry it at last to a conclusion in the spring of 1648, when she was awarded £1500 compensation, to be paid out of Lord Poulett's estate.

It had taken Eleanor four years to secure the award. Two years more were required to extract the money from the delinquent, upon whose rents meanwhile she had a virtual receivership. In July 1650 she complained to Parliament that Lord Poulett still owed her £600. A further laborious investigation was set on foot. Six years passed after the burning of Ashe, which she claimed had lost her £6000, before Lady Drake recovered her £1500 compensation. She had need of it—and, indeed, of every penny. Hers was a family divided against itself by the wars. Her son fought for the Parliament; her son-in-law, Winston Churchill, fought for the King. Both he and his father had taken arms in the Royal cause from the early days. Both in turn—the father first¹—were drawn into the clutches of the Parliament. The Dorsetshire Standing Committee which dealt with the cases of the local Royalists reports in its minutes that in April 1646 John Churchill, a lawyer of some eminence, of Wootton Glanville, near Sherborne, had stated before them that he had formerly

¹ For the composition paid by the first Duke of Marlborough's grandfather see Bayley, p. 405 (local records); *C.S.P. (Compounding)*, pp. 1176-77 (central records).

been nominated a Commissioner for the King ; but he pleaded that in November 1645 he had taken the National Covenant and the Negative Oath. He had paid £300 for the Parliamentary garrison at Weymouth, and £100 on account of his personal estate. Moreover, reported the Committee, he was sixty years of age and unable to travel. In these circumstances in August 1646 he was fined £440, and a month later the sequestration of his estates was suspended.

The reckoning with his son Winston was delayed.¹ Joining the King's army at twenty-two, he had made some mark upon the battlefields. He had become a captain of horse, and his bearing had been noted in the fights at Lansdowne Hill and Roundway Down. He was a youthful, staunch, and bigoted adherent of the King. Towards the end of 1645 he was wounded, and his plight amid the Roundheads now victorious throughout Dorset and Devon was most awkward. However, he had a refuge among the enemy. His father's house at Wootton Glanville was only a day's ride from Ashe. He was married to Lady Drake's third daughter, Elizabeth.

No one has hitherto been able to fix the date of the marriage, or whether it took place before or during the Civil Wars. The Chancery Records, however, state that in October 1649 Winston and his wife Elizabeth sued Sir Henry Rosewell, one of the executors of Sir John Drake, for part of her inheritance, due to her when she was twenty-one. From this case it appears that Sir John died in October 1636, that Elizabeth was twenty-one in February 1643, and that she married in May of that same year.² We know that a formal settlement was made between Winston's father and Lady Drake giving Elizabeth a dowry of £1500. As John Drake had at least four daughters, all of whom were left a similar capital in land, besides the estates left to his widow and son, the Drakes were evidently a substantial family.

¹ For the composition paid by the first Duke of Marlborough's father see *C.S.P. (Compounding)*, pp. 299, 1177; *C.S.P. (Advance of Money)*, 1092-93; vol. cxxi of the Royalist composition papers in the R.O.

² C.6/145, No. 51. Only the interrogatories of the Chancery case exist, and they are so badly damaged that the year of the lawsuit does not appear. From the evidence of the Committee on Compounding, however, it would seem to have taken place not later than 1649.

It is remarkable that such contracts should have been effected between persons so sharply divided by the actual fighting of the Civil Wars. We can see the stresses of the times from the fact that Winston's first child, Arabella, of whom more later, was not born till 1648, or more than five years after the date of the marriage, although thereafter children were born almost every year. No doubt the couple were parted by the severities of the war, and did not live regularly together till the struggle in the Western counties was ended. It is probable that Elizabeth lived with her mother during the whole of the fighting, and that from about the beginning of 1646 Winston joined her there. At any rate, from that time forward the two young people, wedded across the lines of civil war, lay low in the ruins of Ashe, and hoped to remain unnoticed or unpersecuted until the times should mend.

For a while all went well. But a regular system of informers had been set on foot, and, despite Winston's Roundhead connexions and Lady Drake's influence and record, the case against him was not allowed to lapse. At the end of 1649 he was charged with having been a captain in the King's army. According to the Dorsetshire records, witnesses, greedy, interested, but none the less credible, certified that as late as December 1645 Winston was still in the field against the Parliament, that he had been shot through the arm by the forces under Colonel Starr, and that he had resisted to the end with the royal garrison at Bristol. None of these facts could be rebutted.

However, the processes of law continued to work obstinately in spite of war and revolution. Beaten foes had rights which, unless specifically abolished by statute, they could assert. The delinquent captain fell back upon the law. He sought to collect debts owing to him from others. He claimed that a thousand marks given to his wife by her father, the late Sir John Drake, could not be sequestered. He laboured to put off the day when the final sentence would be pronounced. Long delays resulted. By August 1650 the Parliamentary authorities had lost patience. "Some cases," say their records,

are sued out for no other end but to protract time, as that of Winston Churchill, who, it seems by his order, pretended his father (John Churchill) and Lady Ellen Drake had an interest in his portion, whereas he has still a suit depending against Colonel William Fry and Sir Henry Rosewell in his own name, only for his wife's portion; had anybody else a title to it, he would not have commenced such a suit. As to his being in arms, he will surely not so far degenerate from his principles as to deny it.

Nevertheless, it was not till April 29, 1651, that the Commissioners for Compounding finally ordered that

*Winston Churchill of Wootton Glanville in the county of Dorset, gent. do pay as a fine for his Delinquence the sum of Four hundred and four score pounds; whereof four hundred and forty-six pounds eighteen shillings is to be paid into the Treasury at Goldsmith's Hall, and the thirty-three pounds two shillings received already by our Treas. Mr Dawson of Sir Henry Rosewell in part of the money owing by him to John Churchill, father of the said Winston, is hereby allowed of us in part of the sayd Four hundred and four score pounds.¹

Once a statement gets into the stream of history it is apt to flow on indefinitely. In Hutchins' *History of Dorset*, published in 1774, this sum of £446 18s. is, by a misprint, recorded as £4446 18s. This would indeed have been a remarkable fine—the equivalent of perhaps nearly £18,000 of our money—to inflict upon a small country gentleman. A long succession of historians—Coxe (1819), Wolseley (1894), Bayley (1910), Atkinson (1921), and Edwards (1926)—have not only repeated the erroneous and absurd figure, but have expatiated in turn upon its astonishing severity. From it they have con-

¹ S.P., 23/221, f. 855 and v. This document is endorsed on the back "The p'ticular of Winston Churchill gent of Glanvills Wooton in the countye of Dorsett.—A rente charge in fee of one hundred sixtye pounds p. Ann. upon the whole state of John Churchill Esq. of Glanvill Wooton in the Countye of Dorsett excepting onely a leasehold of the Colledge of Winchester which is not liable here too—[signed] W. Churchill." The amount of the fine is further confirmed by a paper headed "Accounts of the Dorset Sequestration Committee, 1652-4," on the back of which is given "The names of the severall psons whoes have payd theis somes followinge into the Treasury att Goldsmiths Hall for their fines." These include "Winston Churchill," who had paid £446 18s. (S.P., 23/80, f. 282.) The only secondary authority the author has come across which gives this figure correctly is Dale, *History of Glanville's Wootton*.

cluded that Winston must have been most exceptionally obnoxious to the Parliament, whereas actually he was very nearly overlooked in the reckoning. Striking contrasts have been drawn between the treatment of father and son, which was in fact almost identical, and Winston has been credited with a far larger share in the wars than was his due. Thus tales are told.

The penalty was, however, severe for a man whose estate seems to have been worth only £160 a year.¹ Although Winston paid his fine at the end of 1651, he did not attempt to keep an independent home. Nor did he live with his father at Wootton Glanville. There may have been other reasons besides impoverishment for this. His father had married a second time about 1643 ;² Winston was apparently on bad terms with his stepmother, and it was to his mother-in-law rather that he turned for aid. When the ultimate judgment and compassion of the Almighty, as the victors would have expressed it, had become fully manifest throughout the West Country, Lady Drake sat indignant on the winning side amid her ruins, and Ashe House continued to be a refuge from poverty, if not from destitution, for the broken Cavalier, his young wife, and growing family. They do not seem to have returned home till Winston's father died in the year before the Restoration. Thus they lived at Ashe for thirteen years, and hard must those years have been. The whole family dwelt upon the hospitality or charity of a mother-in-law of difficult, imperious, and acquisitive temper; a crowded brood in a lean and war-scarred house, between

¹ It is clear from the preceding note and other references in vol. ccxxi of the composition papers that this sum settled on him by his father was the income for which Winston Churchill compounded; in addition his wife had at one time 1000 marks (£666 13s. 4d.) of her own; but there is no indication that Winston Churchill had a further income for which he did not compound. It is true that Wolesey (i, 19) quotes Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, as saying that Winston, when he married, had £1000 a year given him by his father. But all that the Spencer MSS., from which Wolesey derived his information, state is that Winston Churchill "had about £1000 a year from his father"—*i.e.*, presumably when his father died in 1659. See Appendix, II.

² In her reply to Winston Churchill's bill in Chancery of July 10, 1660, Mrs Mary Churchill refers to an agreement made when she was about to marry John Churchill "seventeen years ago" (C.6/148, No. 27).

them and whose owner lay the fierce contentions of the times.

No record is in existence of the daily round of the composite Drake household. We must suppose from its long continuance that family affection and sheer necessity triumphed over unspeakable differences of sentiment and conviction. Lady Drake did her duty faithfully to her daughter's family. She fed, clothed, and sheltered them in such portions of her house as their partisans had left her. They, having scarcely any other resources, accepted her bounty. While Lady Drake, vaunting her fidelity, pursued her claims for compensation from the Parliament, Winston, with her aid and collusion, sought to escape its exactions. It may be that in this prolonged double effort to save as much as possible from the wreck of their affairs a comradeship of misfortune was added to family ties. It must, none the less, have been a queer and difficult home. We may judge of their straitened means by the fact that they could not afford to put a fresh roof over the burned-out parts of the house until after the Restoration. They huddled together all these years in the one remaining wing. The war had impoverished the whole West countryside, and to keep up the style of gentleness and educate children must have imposed a severe frugality on all at Ashe.

To the procreation of children and the slow excitements of frequent litigation Winston added the relief of writing and the study of heraldry. In a substantial and erudite volume, *Divi Britannici*, still widely extant and universally unread, he explored from "the Year of the World 2855" downwards those principles of the Divine Right of Kings for which he had fought and suffered. He went so far in doctrine as to shock even Royalist circles by proclaiming the right of the Crown to levy taxation by its mere motion. To quote from this book¹ is to meet its author across the centuries. In his dedication to Charles II he refers earnestly to Cromwell as

A Devil . . . who . . . intended questionless the same Violence to your Sacred Person, as was offer'd to that of your Father, had not your Tutelar Angels, like those which are said to

¹ *Divi Britannici*, pp. 43, 323-324, 355.

have preserv'd Lot from the Sodomites, shut the Door of Government upon him, and baffled his Ambition by the Revolt of those whom himself first taught to Rebell.

Of the origin of the Scottish nation he gives the following account :

The Scots would be thought a Branch of the antique Scythian Stock, . . . and they have this colour above many others, that as their Ancestors are entituled to as ancient Barbarity as those of any other Nation whatever, so like those rude Scythes, they have always been given to prey upon their Neighbours. . . . Some thinking them a By-slip of the Germans; others of the Scandians; some affirming them to be the Out-casts of some Mongrel Spaniards that were not permitted to live in Ireland, . . . and some there are that with no small probability take them to be a Miscellany of all these nations.

He cherished the theory that all nations derived their names from their food, dress, appearance, habits, etc. He thinks, therefore, the Britons got their name from a drink which the Greeks called "bruton or bruteion, which Athinæus defined as *ton krithinon oinon*—i.e., *Vinum hordeaceum*, Barley Wine." He expatiates on barley wine :

Cæsar affirms that all other Nations of the known World drink Wine or Water only; but the Britains, saith he (who yet have Vines enough) make no other use of them, but for Arbours in their Gardens, or to adorn and set forth their houses, drinking a high and mighty liquor, different from that of any other Nation, made of Barley and Water, which being not so subtil in its operation as Wine, did yet warm as much, and nourish more, leaving space enough for the performance of many great Actions before it quite vanquisht the Spirits.

All this seems very sound doctrine so far as it goes.

Winston's account of the execution of the King shows the intensity of his political feelings and the vigour of his vocabulary.

Here seemed to be the *Consummatum est* of all the happiness of this Kingdom, as well as of the Life of this King: For upon his Death the Vail of the Temple rent, and the Church was overthrown. An universal Darkness overspread the State, which

lasted not for twelve hours only, but twelve years. The two great Luminaries of Law and Gospel were put out: Such as could not write supply'd the place of Judges, such as could not read of Bishops. Peace was maintain'd by War, Licentiousness by Fasting and Prayer. The Commonalty lost their Propriety, the Gentry their Liberty, the Nobility their Honour, the Clergy their Authority and Reverence. The Stream of Government ran down in new-cut Channels, whose Waters were alwayes shallow and troubled: And new Engines were invented by the new Statesmen that had the steerage, to catch all sorts of Fish that came to their Nets; some were undone by Sequestration others by Composition, some by Decimation or Proscription; In fine, it appear'd (when too late) that the whole Kingdom suffer'd more by his suffering then he himself, who being so humbled as he was, even unto death, falling beneath the scorn, mounted above the Envy of his Adversaries, and had this advantage by their Malice, to gain a better Crown then they took from him.

The preface to *Divi Britannici*, which was not published till 1675, contains in its dedication a sentence the force and dignity of which may justify the book. It was, wrote the author, "begun when everybody thought that the monarchy had ended and would have been buried in the same grave with your martyred father," and "that none of us that had served that blessed Prince had any other weapons left us but our pens to show the justice of our zeal by that of his title."

Since Arabella had been born on February 23, 1648,¹ births and deaths swiftly succeeded one another with almost annual regularity. Mrs Winston Churchill had twelve children, of whom seven died in infancy. The third child of these twelve and the eldest son to live is the hero of this account. It is curious that no previous biographer—among so many—should have discovered the entry of his birth. A mystery has been made of it, which Coxe and other writers have used devious methods to solve. It is still often wrongly

¹ The parish registers of St Michael's, Musbury, which the present rector, the Rev. J. Ferguson, allowed the author to consult, give Arabella Churchill as having been born on February 23, 1648, and baptized on March 16, 1648. This corrects erroneous dates in Wolseley (i, 23) and in *D.N.B.*, which says she was born in March.

given.¹ We therefore offer the evidence from the parish register of St. Michael's, Musbury, in facsimile. The infant was baptized in the tiny private chapel of Ashe House seven days later.

*John the sonne of Mr Winston Churchill
born the 26 day of May 1650*

[*John the sonne of Mr Winston Churchill;
born the 26 day of May, 1650.*]

The first ten years of his life were lived in the harsh conditions which have been suggested. We are here in the region of surmise. Facts are vague and few; but it seems easy to believe that the child grew up in a home where wants were often denied, and feelings and opinions had nearly always to be repressed. Public affairs marched forward, and their course was viewed at Ashe from standpoints separated by deep and living antagonisms. Blood and cruel injuries lay between those who gathered around the table. Outraged faith, ruined fortunes, and despairing loyalties were confronted by resolute, triumphant rebellion, and both were bound together by absolute dependence. It would be strange indeed if the children were not conscious of the chasm between their elders; if they never saw resentment on the one side, or felt patronage from the other; if they were never reminded that it was to their grandmother's wisdom and faithful championship of the cause of Parliament they owed the bread they ate. It would be strange if the ardent Cavalier then in his prime, poring over his books of history and heraldry, watching with soured eyes the Lord Protector's victories over the Dutch or the Spaniards and the grand position to which England seemed to have been raised by this arch-wrongdoer, and dreaming of a day when the King

¹ E.g., by Sir John Fortescue, *Marlborough* (1932). Lord Wolseley reproduces the entry of John's baptism from St. Mary's, Axminster, and erroneously implies that there is no record at Musbury of his birth.

should enjoy his own again and the debts of Royalist and regicide be faithfully and sternly settled, should not have spoken words to his little son revealing the bitterness of his heart. The boy may well have learned to see things through his father's eyes, to long with him for a casting down of present pride and power, and have learned at the same time—at six, seven, and eight years of age—not to flaunt these opinions before half at least of those with whom he lived.

The two prevailing impressions which such experiences might arouse in the mind of a child would be, first, a hatred of poverty and dependence, and, secondly, the need of hiding thoughts and feelings from those to whom their expression would be repugnant. To have one set of opinions for one part of the family, and to use a different language to the other, may have been inculcated from John's earliest years. To win freedom from material subservience by the sure agency of money must have been planted in his heart's desire. To these was added a third: the importance of having friends and connexions on both sides of a public quarrel. Modern opinion assigns increasing importance to the influences of early years on the formation of character. Certainly the whole life of John Churchill bore the imprint of his youth. That impenetrable reserve under graceful and courteous manners; those unceasing contacts and correspondences with opponents; that iron parsimony and personal frugality, never relaxed in the blaze of fortune and abundance; that hatred of waste and improvidence in all their forms—all these could find their roots in the bleak years at Ashe.

We may also suppose that Winston Churchill concerned himself a good deal with the early education of his children. For this he was not ill qualified. He had gathered, as his writings show, no inconsiderable store of historical knowledge. He presented in these years the curious figure of a cavalry captain, fresh from the wars, turned perforce recluse and bookworm. Time must have hung heavy on his hands. He had no estates to manage, no profession to pursue. He could not afford to travel; but in the teaching of his children he may well have found alike occupation and solace. Or, again,

he may have loafed and brooded, leaving his children to play in the lanes and gardens of that tranquil countryside. The only information we have on John's education is provided by the unknown author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* (1713):

He was born in the Time of the grand Rebellion, when his Father for Siding with the Royal Party against the Usurpers, who then prevailed, was under many Pressures, which were common to such as adher'd to the King. Yet, notwithstanding the Devastations and Plunderings, and other nefarious Practices and Acts of Cruelty which were daily committed by the licentious Soldiery, no Care was omitted on the Part of his tender Parents for a Liberal and Gentile Education. For he was no sooner out of the hands of the Women but he was given into those of a sequestered Clergyman, who made it his first concern to instil sound Principles of Religion into him, that the Seeds of humane Literature might take the deeper Root, and he from a just Knowledge of the Omnipotence of the Creator, might have a true Sense of the Dependence of the Creature.

Many modern biographers of Marlborough have asserted that Richard Farrant, rector of the neighbouring village of Musbury, was the clergyman here named. It would seem, however, that Farrant was no sequestered Royalist, but, on the contrary, a strong Puritan into whose hands Winston would hardly have let his son fall.¹

It is said that famous men are usually the product of unhappy childhood. The stern compression of circumstances, the twinges of adversity, the spur of slights and taunts in early years, are needed to evoke that ruthless fixity of purpose and tenacious mother-wit without which great actions are seldom accomplished. Certainly little in the environment of the young John Churchill should have deprived him of this stimulus ;

¹ Wolseley (i, 28) was responsible for the assertion that Richard Farrant was Marlborough's "first regular tutor." *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* (p. 5), which is Wolseley's authority, only states that "he was given into [the hands] of a sequestered clergyman." But Farrant was a Puritan divine who became rector of Musbury—probably after the death of Matthew Drake in 1653—and was ejected as a Nonconformist in 1662. This information is based on the parish registers of Musbury and Calamy, *Nonconformist's Memorial*, sub "Musbury."

and by various long-descending channels there centred in him martial and dangerous fires.

Besides attending to his son's education Winston in his studious leisure bethought himself often of his pedigree and his arms. His researches into genealogy have produced as good an account of the origin of the Churchills as is likely to be required.¹ He traced his "Lyon Rampant, Argent upon a Sable coat," to Otho de Leon, Castellan of Gisor, "whome we call our common ancestor." The said Otho had two sons, Richard and Wandrill, Lord of Courcelle, "whose youngest son came into England with William the Conqueror." After recounting conscientiously several generations Winston rested with confidence upon "John . . ., Lord of Currichill, or as 'tis in divers records Chirechile, since called Churchill in Somerssetshire," whose son, Sir Bartholomew de Churchill, "a man of great note in the tyme of King Steven, . . . defended the castle of Bristow against the Empress Maud and was slaine afterward in that warr." In the time of King Edward I, after the Barons' War, the lordship of Churchill was seized by the Crown and given to some favourite, whose posterity continued in possession till "nere about Henry VIII, his tyme." After passing through the hands of a family of the name of Jennings, of whom more later, it was sold eventually in 1652 to a Sir John Churchill, sometime Master of the Rolls, "and had come to my son in right of his wife, had it not been so unfortunately alianated by her said father."

All this was very fine, but when, descending these chains, we come to John, "ancestor of the present Churchills of Munston, and Roger, who by the daughter of Peverell, relict of Nicholas Meggs, has issue Mathew, father of Jaspar, my grandfather," we enter a rather shady phase. Edward Harley rudely asserts "that John Churchill's great grandfather was a blacksmith who worked in the family of the Meggs,"² and certainly, as his great-great-great-grandfather married a Mrs Meggs, this seems very suspicious and even

¹ Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 173-175.

² This reference, which is from a commonplace-book in the possession of the Duke of Portland, the author owes to the kindness of the Duke's librarian, Mr F. Needham.

disquieting. In any case, there are strong grounds for believing that John's grandfather solidly improved the fortunes of this branch of the Churchill family. He was a practising lawyer, a deputy registrar of Chancery as well as a member of the Middle Temple, and lawyers were a prosperous class at this date.¹ Not only did he make a marriage himself into an aristocratic family, the Winstones,² but he seems to have arranged a step for his eldest son. For all the genealogical table produced by Winston, the Drakes were a more renowned and substantial family than the Churchills, of whom there were numerous branches of various conditions, some quite lowly, in Dorset alone; whereas John Drake's family descended eight in line from father to son, and all called John, through the Bernard Drakes, who were already in good repute at the Court of Queen Elizabeth, and passed on the properties at Musbury which had been in their hands from the fifteenth century. Bernard Drake had been a man of so robust quality that he had physically assaulted his relation, the renowned Sir Francis Drake, for daring to display upon his coat of arms a wyvern which he deemed

¹ There is no doubt that he acquired considerable property. He bought Newton Montacute and lands at Wootton Glanville worth at least £600 a year (multiply by about four for the modern equivalent); he leased the neighbouring 'messuage' of Mintern from Winchester College, and he held mortgages on other Devonshire lands. He made a good marriage, and, finally, the fact that he was a man of enterprise and business ability is shown by the proposal made to his tenants at Wootton Glanville in 1639 that he should enclose the common waste in order to improve the agriculture of his property at the public expense. *John Churchill v. Thomas and Edward Mayo* (May 16, 1639, C.8/86, No. 101) mentions the proposal to enclose the common waste. *Winston Churchill Knight v. Henry Mullett* (November 15, 1669; C.5/460, No. 220) shows that at this date the waste was still unenclosed. Polwhele, *History of Devon*, and the various papers relating to the Chancery case of *Winston Churchill v. Mrs Mary Churchill* (1660-61) give details of the property of John Churchill senior and its value.

² Winston says in his letter to Blue Mantle about his coat of arms (1685), "My father by Sarah one of the daughters and co-heires of Sir Henry Winstone of Standish in the county of Gloster, had issue John my elder brother, who dyed presently after his birth, and myselfe who by my wife Elizabeth, third daughter of Sir John Drake of Ashe, have had a plentiful issue; to wit, eight sons and three daughters, my eldest daughter, and the only daughter now living was Arabella, now wife of Colonel Charles Godfrey; my eldest son is the present Lord Churchill who has marryd Sarah one of the daughters and co-heires of Richard Jennings of St Albans, the unfortunate looser of the mannor of Churchill, which is now to be sold, but my son being disappointed of having it given to him as Sir John Churchill allways did promise him, refuses to buy it."

poached from him. Hearing this, Queen Elizabeth conferred upon Sir Francis a wyvern dangling head downward from the yards of a ship, and asked Sir Bernard what he thought of that! He replied, with some temerity, "Madam, though you could give him a *finer*, yet you could not give him an *ancienter* coat than mine."¹ So the marriage arranged for Winston with Lady Drake's daughter Elizabeth was socially satisfactory, and was, as we have seen, a veritable salvation during the Civil Wars.

Another streak of blood, strange and wanton, mingled in the child John's nature. His grandmother, Lady Drake, was herself the daughter of John, Lord Boteler, who had married the sister of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, the favourite of James I and Charles I. Some students have amused themselves in tracing all the men—some of the greatest and wickedest in our history—who have descended from George Villiers, father of Buckingham. They are said to have repeatedly produced, across the centuries, the favourites, male and female, of kings and queens; and Chatham and Pitt, as well as Marlborough, bear the distinction of this taint or genius.

When at length, at the end of her life, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, read—tardily, for it had been kept from her—Lediard's history of the Duke, she made the following extremely up-to-date comment upon this part of the subject: * "This History takes a great deal of Pains to make the Duke of Marlborough's Extraction very ancient. That may be true for aught I know; But it is no matter whether it be true or not in my opinion. For I value nobody for another's merit."²

Be this as it may, students of heredity have dilated upon this family tree. Galton cites it as one of the chief examples on which his thesis stands.³ Winston himself has been accounted one of the most notable and potent of sires. Had he lived the full span, he would have witnessed within the space of twelve months his son gaining the battle of Ramillies

¹ Prince, *Worthies of Devon*, p. 245.

² Spencer MSS., paper enclosed in a letter from Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, to David Mallet, October 4, 1744.

³ Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, pp. 81, 154.

and his daughter's son that of Almanza; and would have found himself acknowledged as the progenitor of the two greatest captains of the age at the head of the opposing armies of Britain and of France and Spain. Moreover, his third surviving son, Charles, became a soldier of well-trying distinction, and his naval son virtually managed the Admiralty during the years of war. The military strain flowed strong and clear from the captain of the Civil Wars, student of heraldry and history, and champion of the Divine Right. It was his blood, not his pen, that carried his message.

Although in this opening chapter we have set the reader in these bygone times, eleven years of our hero's life have already been accomplished. Ashe House, still unroofed, passes from the scene. Lord Wolseley was keenly stirred by its remnants and their surroundings. They awoke in this brave and skilful officer "memories of English glory." "Surely," he exclaims,

the imagination is more fired and national sentiment more roused by a visit to the spot where one of our greatest countrymen was born and passed his childhood than by any written record of his deeds. This untidy farmhouse, with its [now] neglected gardens, and weed-choked fish-ponds, round which the poor, badly clothed boy sported during his early years, seems to recall his memory—aye, even the glory with which he covered England—more vividly than a visit to Blenheim Palace, or a walk over the famous position near the village of Hochstadt on the banks of the Danube. The place, the very air, seems charged with reminiscences of the great man who first drew breath here.¹

These scenes certainly played a curiously persistent part in John Churchill's life. It was on the very soil of his childhood, in sight almost of his birthplace, that he was in 1685 to lead the Household Cavalry, feeling their way towards Monmouth's army; and three years later on the hill across the river he was to meet the Prince of Orange after deserting James II. So much for Ashe!

But now the times are changed. Oliver Cromwell is dead. General Monk has declared for a free Parliament. His troops

¹ Wolseley, i, 11-12.

have marched from Coldstream to Hounslow. The exiled Charles has issued the Declaration of Breda. The English people, by a gesture spontaneous and almost unanimous, have thrown off the double yoke of military and Puritan rule. Amid bonfires and the rejoicings of tumultuous crowds they welcome back their erstwhile hunted sovereign, and by one of those intense reactions, sometimes as violent in whole nations as in individuals, change in a spasm from oppressive virtue to unbridled indulgence. On April 23, 1661, Charles II was crowned at Westminster, and the restoration of the English monarchy was complete.

These memorable events produced swift repercussions at Ashe House. Winston Churchill passed at a stroke from the frown of an all-powerful Government to the favour of a King he had faithfully served. The frozen years were over, and the Cavaliers, emerging from their retreats, walked abroad in the sun, seeking their lost estates. We need not grudge him these good days. He had acted with unswerving conviction and fidelity. He had drunk to the dregs the cup of defeat and subjugation. Its traces can be seen in his anxious eyes. Now was the time of reward. Instantly he sprang into many forms of activity. In 1661 he entered Parliament for Weymouth. In 1664 he became one of the original members of the Royal Society. Although his fortunes were much depleted, he regained his independence and a hearth of his own. More important than this, he stood in a modest way high in the favour of the new régime. He was received with consideration and even intimacy at Court. The terms under which Charles had returned to his kingdom were not such as to allow him to bestow wealth upon his humbler adherents. His sovereignty rested on a compromise between rebels and Royalists, between Anglicans and Presbyterians, between those who had seized estates and those who had lost them, between the passions of conflicting creeds and the pride of lately hostile regiments. He had no means of meeting even the just claims which faithful subjects might urge, still less could he satisfy the ravenous demands of long-nursed grievances or blatant imposture.



SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

Sir Peter Lely

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

Burnet says, speaking of an earlier time :

The herd of the Cavalier party was now very glorious and full of courage in their cups, though they had been very discreet managers of it in the field and in time of action, but now every one of them boasted he had killed his thousands, and all were full of merit and as full of high pretentions.

It is remarkable, however, that amid the crowds of hungry and often deserving suitors who thronged the antechambers of Whitehall so much attention should have been paid to the merits and services of Winston Churchill. Far more was done for him than for most. There was one cheap, sure way to please him. It was apparently well known. Accordingly an augmentation of arms and a crest unusual in a family of such standing was offered to his heraldic propensities.¹ Nevertheless, this evidence of royal favour and affection was not in itself sufficiently substantial, in Winston's opinion at least, to repair the injuries he had suffered in pocket and skin. He remained cherished but disconsolate, blazoning on his new coat of arms an uprooted oak above the motto *Fiel pero desdichado* ("Faithful but unfortunate"). More practical reliefs, as will be shown in the next chapter, were however in store.

¹ The King to Sir Edward Walker, Garter, December 11, 1661: "Orders an augmentation of a St George's cross gules, on a canton argent, to the arms of Winston Churchill, of Miniterne [*cit.*], co. Dorset, for service to the late King as captain of horse, and for his present loyalty as a member of the House of Commons." (C.S.P. (*Dom.*), 1661-62, p. 176.) For Winston's comment on this grant see Bath Papers, *loc. cit.*

CHAPTER II

THE JOVIAL TIMES

(1661-1669)

OUR readers must now brace themselves for what will inevitably be a painful interlude. We must follow the fortunes or misfortunes of a maiden of seventeen and her younger brother as they successively entered a dissolute Court. The King was the fountain not only of honour, but of almost every form of worldly success and pleasure. Access to his presence, intimacy with his family or favourites, were the sole pathway even of modest and lawful ambition. An enormous proportion of the amenities and glories of the realm was engrossed in the narrow family circle of royal personages, friends, dependants, and important Ministers or agents of the Crown. Nearly all chances of distinction and solid professional advancement went by favour. An officer well established at Court was a different kind of officer from one who had nothing but the merits of his sword. The success of jurists and divines was similarly determined. The royal light shone where it listed, and those who caught its rays were above competition and almost beyond envy, except—an important exception—from rivals in their own select sphere.

If those were the conditions which ruled for men, how much more compulsive was the environment of the frailer sex. To sun oneself in the royal favour, to be admitted to the charmed circle, to have access to a royal lady, to be about the person of a queen or princess, was to have all this exclusive, elegant, ambitious, jostling world on one's doorstep and at one's footstool. Aged statesmen and prelates; eager, ardent, attractive youths; the old general, the young lieutenant—all produced whatever treasure they had to bestow to win the favour of the sovereign's mistress, or of his relations' mistresses, and

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of his important friends or servants. That nothing should be lacking to frame the picture of privilege and indulgence, it must be remembered that all this was dignified by the affairs of a growing state, by the presence of upright and venerable men and formidable matrons, providing the counterpoise of seriousness and respectability. Scientists, philosophers, theologians, scholars; the mayors of cities, rugged sea-captains, veteran colonels, substantial merchants—all pressed forward on the fringes of the parade in the hope of being gratified by some fleeting glint of the royal radiance.

Such ideas seem remote to the English-speaking nations in these times. Here or in the United States we can scarcely conceive a social life where a royal, or at least a very wealthy person would not be compelled to set an example. Our aristocracy has largely passed from life into history; but our millionaires—the financiers, the successful pugilists, and the film stars who constitute our modern galaxy and enjoy the same kind of privilege as did the outstanding figures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—are all expected to lead model lives. We must make allowances for the backward conditions which prevailed in England and France, to say nothing of the barbarous countries, when Charles II and Louis XIV sat upon their thrones. There was undoubtedly an easy commerce of the sexes, marked at times by actual immorality. Men and women who had obtained power were often venal, and insolent besides, to those whom they dubbed their inferiors. Even judges were occasionally, and members of the legislature frequently, corrupt. Generals and admirals were usually jealous of each other, and sometimes stooped to intrigue to gain promotion. Even brilliant writers and pamphleteers, the journalists of those primitive times, wrote scurrilous gossip to please their patrons and employers. We in this happy and enlightened age must exercise our imagination to span the gulf which separates us from those lamentable, departed days. Securely established upon the rock of purity and virtue, ceaselessly cleansed by the strong tides of universal suffrage, we can afford to show

tolerance and even indulgence towards the weaknesses and vices of those vanished generations without in any way compromising our own integrity.

It is strange indeed that such a system should have produced for many generations a succession of greater captains and abler statesmen than all our widely extended education, competitive examinations, and democratic system have put forth. Apart from the Church and the learned professions, the area of selection was restricted entirely to the circles of rank, wealth, and landed property. But these comprised several thousand families within which and among whom an extremely searching rivalry and appraisalment prevailed. In this focus of the nation men were known and judged by their equals with intimate knowledge and a high degree of comprehension. There may be more truth than paradox in Lord Fisher's brutal maxim, "Favouritism is the secret of efficiency." There was, of course, great need to seek out ability. Appointments and promotions went largely by favour: but favour went largely by merit.

The English Court under Charles II was no Oriental scene of complete subservience, where women were secluded and where men approached the supreme figures with bated breath. It had not the super-centralization of the French Court under Louis XIV. The nobility and wealthy gentlefolk could live on their estates, and though excluded from the fame of national employment, had effective rights which they used frequently against the Crown. There were always independent powers in England. This counterpoise enhanced the strength of the central institution. There were degrees, values, and a hierarchy of considerable intrinsic virtue. A great society, sharply criticized, but accepted as supreme, indulging every caprice and vanity, and drawing to itself the chief forms of national excellence, presided at the summit of the realm.

It is important to remember also the differences of feeling and outlook which separate the men and women of these times from ourselves. They gave a very high—indeed, a dominating—place in their minds to religion. It played as

large a part in the life of the seventeenth century as sport does now. One of their chief concerns was about the next world and how to be saved. Although ignorant compared with our standards, they were all deeply versed in the Bible and the Prayer Book. If they read few books, they studied them and digested them thoroughly. They had settled opinions on large questions of faith and doctrine, and were often ready to die or suffer on account of them.

Rank and breeding were second only to religion in their esteem. Every one in Court or county society was known, and all about them. Their forbears for many generations were carefully scrutinized. The coat of arms which denoted the family's achievements for hundreds of years was narrowly and jealously compared. It was not easy to get into the great world in those days, if one did not belong to it. A very clear line was drawn between 'gentles' and 'simples,' and the Church and the Law were almost the only ladders by which new talent could reach the highest positions. Indeed, religion and family pride together absorbed much of the sentiment now given to nationalism. The unity of Christendom had been ruptured at the Reformation, but strong cosmopolitan sympathies prevailed among the educated classes in all the Western countries.

We must not imagine that our ancestors were as careless and ignorant about international politics as are the immense political democracies of the present age. Had they been absorbed or amused as we are by the inexhaustible trivialities of the day, had their sense been dulled by speed, sport, luxury, and money-making, they could never have taken consciously the dire decisions without which England would not have been preserved. There were many solid citizens, secure in their estates, who pondered deeply and resolved valiantly upon the religious and political issues of the times. Although the administration of England had not attained to anything like the refined and ordered efficiency of France, there was already a strong collective view about fundamental dangers. There was already a recognizable if rudimentary Foreign Office opinion. And there were in every capital grave,

independent men who gave lifelong thought to doctrine and policy. Their business was transacted by long personal letters, laboriously composed, in which every word was weighed, and conversations, few and far between, the purport of which was memorable. Government was then the business of sovereigns and of a small but serious ruling class, and, for all their crimes, errors, and shortcomings, they gave keen and sustained attention to their task.

In these days society was callous about prisoners and punishments, and frightful forfeits were senselessly exacted. But these were the ages of Pain. Pain, when it came, was accepted as a familiar foe. No anæsthetic robbed the hospital of all the horrors of the torture-chamber. All had to be endured, and hence—strangely enough—all might be inflicted. Yet in some ways our forerunners attached more importance to human life than we do. Although they fought duels about women and other matters of honour, instead of seeking damages from the courts, and although death sentences were more numerous in those days, they would have recoiled in lively horror from the constant wholesale butcheries of scores of thousands of persons every year by motor-cars, at which the modern world gapes unconcernedly. Their faculties for wonder and indignation had not been blunted and worn away by the catalogues of atrocities and disasters which the advantages of the electric telegraph and the newspaper press place at our disposal every morning and evening. Above all, they were not in a hurry. They made fewer speeches, and lived more meditatively and more at leisure, with companionship rather than motion for their solace. They had far fewer facilities than we have for the frittering away of thought, time, and life. Altogether they were primitive folk, and we must make allowances for their limitations. The one trait which they shared in common with the twentieth century was the love of money, and respect and envy for its fortunate possessors. But, then, money in those days was still mainly derived from land, and the possession of land usually denoted ancient lineage.

The Convention Parliament of the Restoration was dis-

solved in 1660, and the so-called Cavalier, or Pensionary, Parliament met in May 1661. This was "a parliament full of lewd young men, chosen by a furious people in spite to the Puritans, whose severity had distasted them." They were "of loyal families, but young men for the most part, which being told the King, he replied that there was no great fault, for he could keep them till they got beards."¹ So in fact he did; for this Parliament continued to sit for eighteen years. In it Winston Churchill represented the constituency of Weymouth. During its first two sessions he was an active Member; he served on various committees, and as late as May 10, 1662, he was sent by the Commons to request the participation of the Lords in a joint committee to discuss questions arising out of an Army Bill.²

Meanwhile the Restoration settlement in Ireland was proceeding very slowly.³ On November 30, 1660, the King had issued a declaration which had laid it down that lands in the possession of the Cromwellian settlers up to May 1659 were to be retained by them; Royalist Protestants and 'innocent' Roman Catholics were to receive restitution or compensation; Church lands were to be given back; and certain persons specially named were to be rewarded from this source for their past good services to the Royal cause. Thirty-six commissioners had been appointed to carry out this statute, and had set up an office in Dublin in May 1661. But, whether because of contradictory clauses in the Act or because, as the Irish alleged, of the interested motives of the commissioners, after nearly a year's work only one claim—that of a widow—had been settled. In April 1662 the office was closed pending the introduction into the Irish Parliament of a Bill of Settlement embodying the royal declaration. The King had himself blamed the commissioners for their failure to make progress in their work, and seven new commissioners were now

¹ Osmund Airy, *Charles II*, p. 177.

² See *Commons Journals*, viii, *passim*, and especially p. 425.

³ The most recent account of the Restoration settlement in Ireland is to be found in R. Bagwell, *Ireland under the Stuarts*, vol. iii (1916), chapters xli, xlii. See also E. A. Dalton, *History of Ireland* (1906), chapter xx, and J. P. Prendergast, *Ireland from the Restoration to the Revolution* (1887).

chosen to go over to Ireland and reopen the Court of Claims. "His Majesty," wrote the Lord Chancellor Clarendon,

made Choice of seven Gentlemen of very clear Reputations ; one of them being an eminent Sergeant-at-Law whom He made a Judge upon his Return from thence ; two others, Lawyers of very much Esteem ; and the other four Gentlemen of very good Extractions, excellent Understandings, and above all Suspicion for their Integrity, and generally reputed to be superior to any base Temptation.¹

Among these latter Winston Churchill, who had not been one of the thirty-six and had no interest in Irish lands, was named. He seems to have obtained this honourable post through the influence of Sir Henry Bennet, about to be created Lord Arlington and Secretary of State, under whose patronage he had first been introduced into the Court at Whitehall.² Winston probably sailed to Ireland to carry out his new duties in July ; for there is a warrant for him to ship horses and goods thither dated July 19, 1662.³ He took his family with him, his wife being with child. His Irish task was neither lucrative nor inspiring. His own experiences in an earlier decade had made him only too well acquainted with the dismal process of redistributing sequestered lands. Week after week crowds of tattered nobles and dispossessed landowners who sought to regain their estates from the Commission by proving their past loyalty beset the harassed tribunal. But there was little to share, and less still was bestowed.

Meanwhile the boy John for a time attended the Dublin Free Grammar School. Lord Wolseley suggests that he was frequently a witness of the proceedings of the Court of Claims, and that he learned from this dreary spectacle how scurvily loyalty is often treated, and how brazenly successful rebellion

¹ Continuation of his *Life* (ed. 1759), p. 117.

² Cf. Sir Winston Churchill to the Earl of Arlington, April 28, 1666, Dublin : " And this my Lord I have chosen to deliver by the hands of my son [John ?], that by being witness to mine he may learn his own obligations, and make his first entry into the Court (as I did) under the patronage of your Lordship's favour." (S.P. 63/320, f. 226.)

³ *C.S.P. (Treasury Books)*, 1660-67, p. 411.

and treachery maintain themselves, even after a restoration. This again is pure surmise. A youth, by all accounts of singular beauty and address, with qualities of force and fire which were already noticeable, was growing to manhood. The grim years at Ashe House had made their mark upon his fibre. The joyous transformation which the return of the King had effected in the family fortunes, the events and spectacle of the Restoration, the Irish squalor, must all have been observed by an intelligence certainly discerning and perhaps already profound. Still, we do not think that external events played after childhood a dominating part in the development of his character. The personality unfolds with remorseless assurance, sometimes in harmony with, but as often in opposition to its environment.

Throughout 1663 Winston Churchill and his fellow-commissioners remained in Ireland. Their task was a difficult one. On March 25 they wrote to Whitehall affirming that

Since our coming into this Kingdom, we have found so many unexpected discouragements, from those whose security and settlement was and is a powerful part of our care, that we confess we were much dejected. . . . But we have now received new life from his sacred Majesty's most gracious letters to us, by which we understand that neither our sufferings, nor our innocence, were hid from, or unconsidered by his Majesty.¹

Nevertheless, in December Churchill begged Arlington for leave to return home for just two months,² so desirous was he of a rest from his labours. A month later his wish was gratified, for the King summoned him back to England on January 10, 1664,³ and twelve days later rewarded his services with a knighthood.⁴ If Winston brought his eldest son with him from Dublin on this occasion, as there is every reason to suppose, it must have been at this date that John Churchill became one of the 153 scholars of St Paul's School. His father bought a house somewhere in the City, where the

¹ S.P., 63/313, f. 78, partly printed in *C.S.P. (Ireland)*, 1663-65, p. 49.

² S.P., 63/315, f. 42. Cf. *C.S.P. (Ireland)*, 1666-69, p. 281.

³ *H.M.C.*, iv, 247. This is wrongly calendared as January 10, 1662/3, instead of 1663/4, a mistake which confused Lord Wolseley.

⁴ W. A. Shaw, *The Knights of England*, ii, 239.

fourteen-year-old boy lived while he attended school ;¹ but on September 13, 1664, Winston was appointed Junior Clerk Comptroller to the Board of Green Cloth, a minor post in the royal household, and moved into Whitehall.²

There is no contemporary record of John Churchill at St Paul's School.³ In fact, all the records of the school were destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. However, the Rev. George North, Rector of Colyton, has inscribed on p. 483 of his copy of Knight's *Life of Colet*, long preserved in the Bodleian Library and now at St Paul's School, the following note against a reference to Vegetius' *De Re Militari* :

From this very book, John Churchill, scholar of this school, afterwards the celebrated Duke of Marlborough, first learnt the elements of the art of war, as was told to me, George North on Saint Paul's day 1724/5 by an old clergyman who said he was a contemporary scholar, was then well acquainted with him, and frequently saw him read it. This I testify to be true.

G. NORTH⁴

Several of his biographers have weighed the significance of this fact, if it be true. On the one hand, it is contended that John's knowledge of Latin at that time could not have enabled him to derive any profit from the military principles expounded by Vegetius, even in so far as such principles were applicable to the conditions of eighteenth-century warfare. On the other hand, it has often been suggested that by some occult dispensation our hero was able to extract various modern sunbeams from this ancient cucumber.

About 1665 the Duchess of York was graciously pleased to offer Winston's eldest daughter, Arabella, a coveted appointment as maid of honour. Historians have inquired in wonder how a strict and faithful husband, a devoted father, and a God-

¹ The Duchess of Marlborough to David Mallet, October 4, 1744, following the passage about St Paul's School quoted below at p. 46: "And the Duke of Marlborough . . . shewed me the House where he lived." (Spencer MSS.)

² Wolseley, i, 22, quoting the records of the Board of Green Cloth.

³ There is an article by R. B. Gardiner in *The Pauline* of June 1892 which assembles the printed evidence of Marlborough's presence at St Paul's School. The best evidence of this, however, is that of Marlborough's wife, quoted below at p. 46.

⁴ Coxe (*Memoirs of Marlborough*, chapter i) wrongly asserts that this note is in a copy of Vegetius. The information that the note is to-day in the Walker Library of St Paul's School is from the present librarian, the Rev. I. Mavor.

fearing Anglican Cavalier could have allowed his well-loved daughter to become involved in a society in which so many pitfalls abounded. In fact he was delighted, and so was his wife, and every one whom they knew and respected hastened to congratulate the family upon an auspicious and most hopeful preferment. Who should say what honours might not flow from such propinquity to the King's brother and heir to the throne? The sanction of Divine Right descended not only on all around the sovereign, but upon all within the sacred circle of the blood royal. Power, fame, wealth, social distinction, awaited those who gained the royal favour. The association was honourable and innocent, and should any mishap occur, Church and State stood attentive to conceal or vindicate the damage. Thus it was thought a splendid advantage for a young girl to be established at Court and take her fortune there as it came.

Arabella after some delays prospered in the Duke of York's household. Anthony Hamilton, who is famous for the authorship of Grammont's memoirs, has penned some mischievous pages from which historians diligently fail to avert their eyes.¹ There is a tale of a riding-party to a greyhound-coursing near York, and of Arabella's horse running away in a headlong gallop; of a fall and a prostrate figure on the sward; of the Royal Duke to the rescue, and of a love born of this incident. Hamilton declares that, while Arabella's face presented no more than the ordinary feminine charms, her figure was exceedingly beautiful, and that James was inflamed by the spectacle of beauty in distress and also in disarray. It is, however, certain that some time before 1668 Arabella became the mistress of the Duke of York, and that in the next seven or eight years she bore him four children, of whom the second was James Fitz-James, afterwards Duke of Berwick, Marshal of France and victor of Almanza. There is no disputing these facts, and historians may rest upon them with confidence.

¹ This story is to be found in C. H. Hartmann's edition of the *Memoirs*, translated by Peter Quennell (1930), pp. 285-286. Lord Wolsley says the incident took place near York.

Among the many stains with which John Churchill's record has been darkened stands the charge that he lightly and even cheerfully acquiesced in his sister's dishonour—or honour, as it was regarded in the moral obliquity of the age. Why did he not thus early display the qualities of a future conqueror and leader of men? Why did he not arrive hot-foot at Whitehall, challenge or even chastise the high-placed seducer, and rescue the faltering damsel from her sad plight? We must admit that all researches for any active protest upon his part have been fruitless. Nearly sixty years afterwards the old Duchess, Sarah, whose outspoken opinions have already been quoted, made her comments upon this default in terms certainly not beyond the comprehension of our own day. Writing to David Mallet about Lediard's history, she says in the letter already quoted:

* I want to say something more than I have done in the enclosed Paper, to shew how extremely mistaken Mr Lediard was in naming the Duke of Marlborough's Sister and her 'Train of Bastards. Because they had Titles he seems to think that was an Honour to the Duke of Marlborough. I think it quite the contrary. For it seems to insinuate that his first Introduction was from an infamous Relation, when the whole Truth of that matter was as follows: His sister was a Maid of Honour to the first Dutchesse of York, Hyde. She had at least two or three Bastards by the Duke of York or others, when her Brother was whipt at St Paul's School for not reading his Book. . . . Now I would fain have any Reasonable Body tell me what the Duke of Marlborough could do when a Boy at School to prevent the Infamy of his Sister, or why Mr Lediard could have any Judgment in mentioning King James's Favourite.¹

On September 28, 1665, the King commanded the Board of Green Cloth to "dispense with the attendance of Sir Winston Churchill, one of the comptrollers of my household, he being appointed a commissioner for carrying into effect the bill for the better settlement of Ireland."² By the following January Sir Winston was back again in Dublin, but he had left his wife and family behind him in England. By this date his

¹ See above, p. 44 n. 1.

² *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1664-65, p. 575.



ARABELLA CHURCHILL
After Sir Peter Lely
By permission of Earl Spencer

eldest son, John, had left school and had been made page to James, Duke of York. The author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* relates that James had been struck by the beauty of the boy, whom he had often seen about the Court. It may be, however, that the influence of Sir Winston's patron, the Earl of Arlington, had effected this choice. The father was well content with this: he thought it the best opening he could find for any of his sons. Shortly afterwards Arlington obtained a similar, if not so exalted, position for John's brother George, to accompany the famous Earl of Sandwich, late commander-in-chief of the Navy, to the Court of Madrid. In writing from dismal Ireland to thank the Secretary of State for this attention Sir Winston, now a civil servant, observed, "though (as times go now) it is no great preferment to be a Page, yet I am not ignorant of the benefit of disposing him (in such a Juncture of time as this) into that country where all the Boys seem Men, and all the men seem wise." And he concluded his letter by hoping that "my Sons may with equal gratitude subscribe themselves as I do," his faithful servant.¹

Sir Winston Churchill remained in Ireland, serving upon his Commission, until 1669. He returned at intervals to London to fulfil his Parliamentary duties, and seems to have acted as a sort of agent at Whitehall for the other commissioners. How competent was Sir Winston in his business? The fact that his father had been a lawyer may have given him some training in adjudicating disputes, and he seems to have waded his way honestly through the stream of petitions and counter-petitions submitted to him. In 1675 one of Ormonde's correspondents informed him that Churchill had left his papers and accounts in great confusion.² But a curious fact is that in his administration of his duties he

¹ Sir Winston Churchill to the Earl of Arlington, January 13, 1666, Dublin (S.P. 63/320, f. 9). The editor of the *C.S.P. (Ireland)* attributes this reference in his index to John, Duke of Marlborough, but the original letter clearly says "my younger son." As John was his eldest surviving son and George his second son it seems probable that this must be George, especially as Charles, Sir Winston's third son, was only ten years old at this date. No reference is made to the appointment in any of the biographies in *D.N.B.*

² Ormonde Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 90.

got into the bad books of the Duke of York. One of the chief causes that delayed the settlement was the grant which the Duke of York had been given of the Irish estates of the regicides. The Duke's rascally agents, "the worst under-instruments he could well light on," as the Lord-Lieutenant Ormonde described them, made claim after claim on the basis of this grant, and effectively prevented the commissioners from dealing with the cases of the poor and deserving. One summer's morning Sir Winston Churchill lost his temper with the Duke's agents, calling them "a pack of knaves and cheats that daily betrayed their master."

One of these agents, a certain Captain Thornhill, thereupon came to him, hoping to trap him into treason. There is a record of the conversation which throws an intimate and not unpleasing gleam of light on Winston's character.

Having told him how much he had suffered by what he said in open Court, the Captain desired to know who he meant by "the Duke's agents"? The other hotly replied, "What! Are you come to challenge and Hector me? I meant *you*!" The other replied: "The words were 'the Duke's agents'—that it could not be he only meant me!" "No!" said Sir Winston, "I intended you and Dr Gorges—and the whole pack of you." "Sir!" said Thornhill, "Will you give me under your hand that I am a knave?" "Alas!" replied Churchill, "how long is it since you became so squeasy-stomached that you could not brook being called a knave? You shall have it under my hand," and called his man to fetch paper and ink. But the whilst the Captain took occasion to proceed in temptation, and told him Sir Jerome [?] was the Duke's chief agent. He presumed he durst not call him so. "Yes," in passion replied the Knight, "He's the chief knave, and so I can prove you all," and with that directed the Captain to the stairs, who seeing the necessity of either running down the stairs or being thrown down [beat a retreat] as the least of two evils.¹

His son John would perhaps already have handled the business with more discretion. The tale was speedily carried to Whitehall. When Sir Winston was in England he found

¹ For this passage see Bagwell, *op. cit.*, and the thirty-second report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records (on the Carte Papers), pp. 170-181.

some difficulty in explaining his attitude to the Duke and Duchess of York. Already on March 10, 1668, he had written, "I am quite tired out with the continual duty I am upon here having obtained no other rewards from the Duchess but to be represented to the Duke as the very greatest enemy he hath of all the Commissioners." ¹ However, his reckless outspokenness did not kill his favour.

Meanwhile the annals of John are even more scanty than those of his father. Marlborough is, indeed, the last of the great commanders about whose early life practically nothing is recorded. That he was born in 1650, that he lived in his grandmother's house for nine years, that he went with his father to Dublin, that he attended St Paul's School, and that he went to Court as page to the Duke of York at about the age of sixteen and later entered the Army, sums the total of our information. We know as much of the early years of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Julius Cæsar as we do of this figure separated from us by scarcely a couple of centuries. Thereafter we enter the periods of voluminous biographies, and Frederick the Great, Wolfe, Clive, Napoleon, Wellington, Lee, Jackson, Grant, Moltke, Marshals Foch and Haig, and General Pershing offer us rich opportunities of studying military genius in its dawn.

¹ Stowe MSS., 745, f. 10.

CHAPTER III

BARBARA

(1667-1671)

JOHN served the Duke of York as page, and, like his sister, dwelt happily in the royal household. His duties were neither onerous nor unpleasant. He had no money; but he lived in comfort and elegance. He knew all the great people of the English world, and many of its prettiest women. No one was concerned to be disagreeable to this attractive, discreet, engaging youth, who moved gaily about the corridors and anterooms of Whitehall with a deft, decided step, and never slipped or slid on those polished floors where a clumsy fall may so easily be final. He must have met about this time one of the King's pages, a young man five years his senior—Sidney Godolphin. There is a gulf between youths of sixteen and twenty-one. It soon narrowed. The two became friends; and their unbroken association runs through this story.

The Duke of York was a resolute and experienced commander. After religion the art of war claimed the foremost place in his thoughts. As Lord High Admiral he knew the service of the sea. His interest in the land forces was no less keen. It was his custom to spend a part of many days in reviewing and drilling the troops. He would frequently muster two battalions of the Guards in Hyde Park, and have them put through their elaborate exercises in his presence. His page accompanied him on these occasions. The mere operation of loading and firing the musket involved twenty-two distinct motions. The flint-lock was not yet adopted in England, and the priming of the weapon and the lighting of the matches were added to the process of loading the powder and ramming home wad and bullet. The bayonet, though invented, was not yet in use. One pikeman served as protection to two musketeers when the approach of cavalry was

apprehended. Very deliberate and stately were the Royal Guards in their round beaver hats and scarlet uniforms as they performed their complicated ritual. All the evolutions to form a front in any direction, or to change into a column, or a square with the steel-helmeted pikemen at the angles, were of the same complex order. But by the long usage of drill and discipline it was hoped that everything would be carried out faultlessly and nothing slurred over in the heart-shaking moments before a whirlwind of horsemen might fall with sabres upon ranks which, their volleys once fired, were for the time well-nigh defenceless.

At these parades the Duke of York noticed the interest of his page. He saw the boy following with gleaming eyes the warlike ceremonial. One day after a review he asked him what profession he preferred. Whereupon John fell upon his knees and demanded "a pair of colours in one of these fine regiments." The request was not denied.¹

We are, of course, assured that this was a piece of favouritism which he owed to his sister's shame; and—somewhat inconsistently—that at the same time it made him the lifelong debtor of the Duke of York. There is no need to use these strained interpretations of what was a very ordinary transaction. It was natural enough that the son of a loyal, hard-fighting Cavalier should be received at King Charles's Court. In these youthful days John gained no office or promotion that might not have come to any young gentleman accepted there. To be made a page and afterwards an ensign was not excessive favour, nor beyond the deserts of a healthy, well-bred youth from a public school. These small appointments were suited to his years and station, and were justified on his own merits not less than on paternal claims. There is surely no need to ferret for other explanations; nor shall we join in the meticulous disputings in which some writers have indulged about whether John received his commission before or after Arabella became the Duke's mistress. The Guards gained a good recruit officer in the normal course.

¹ The original authority for this story is *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*. The date of Churchill's first commission as Ensign is September 14, 1667.

Besides his sister Arabella John had a tie of kinship and acquaintance with another favourite of high importance. On the eve of his restoration Charles II met at The Hague Barbara Villiers, then newly married to Roger Palmer, afterwards Earl of Castlemaine. She became his mistress ; she preceded him to England ; she adorned the triumphs and enhanced for him the joys of the Restoration. She was a woman of exceeding beauty and charm, vital and passionate in an extraordinary degree. In the six years that had passed she had borne the King several children. At twenty-four, in the heyday of her success, this characteristic flower of the formidable, errant Villiers stock was the reigning beauty of the palace. She held Charles in an intense fascination. Her rages, her extravagances, her infidelities seemed only to bind him more closely in her mysterious web. She was John Churchill's second cousin once removed. His mother's sister, a Mrs Godfrey, was her closest confidante. The young page, it is said,¹ was often in his aunt's apartments eating sweets, and there Barbara soon met and made friends with this good-looking boy. Very likely she had known him from his childhood. Naturally she was nice to him, and extended her powerful protection to her young and sprightly relation. Naturally, too, she aroused his schoolboy's admiration. There is not, as we shall hope to convince the reader, the slightest ground for suggesting that the beginning of their affection was not perfectly innocent and such as would normally subsist between a well-established woman of the world and her cousin, a boy of sixteen, newly arrived at the Court where she was dominant.

That Barbara was an elevating influence upon John's life, even in these early days, it is far from our purpose to contend. Says Burnet : ²

The ruine of his [Charles'] reign, and of all his affairs, was occasioned chiefly by his delivering himself up at his first coming over to a mad range of pleasures. One of the race of Villiers, then married to Palmer, a Papist, soon after made Earl of Castlemaine, who afterwards being separated from him was advanced

¹ *The New Atalantis* (ed. 1720), i, 31.

² *History of My Own Time*, i, 94.



BARBARA, DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND

By permission of Viscount Dillon

to be Duchess of Cleveland, was his first and longest mistress, by whom he had five children. She was a woman of great beauty, but most enormously vitious and ravenous; foolish but imperious, very uneasy to the King, and always carrying on intrigues with other men, while yet pretending she was jealous of him. His passion for her and her strange behaviour towards him, did so disorder him, that often he was not master of himself, nor capable of minding business, which in so critical a time required great application.

More than forty years later (1709) there was published a book *The New Atalantis*, written by a certain Mrs Manley. She was a woman of disreputable character paid by the Tories to take part in the campaign of detraction which, in the intense political passion of the time, was organized against Marlborough. Swift, who to a large extent directed this villipending, speaks of her as one of his "under spur-leathers." *The New Atalantis* is a scandalous and indecent chronicle of the Court of Charles II, conceived in the mood of the *Decameron* or the memoirs of Casanova, but without the grace and sparkle which have redeemed these works. In its scurrility and lasciviousness it goes far beyond Grammont. No names of actual persons are mentioned, but the identity of the characters is apparent. A sexual or corrupt motive is assigned for almost every action or transaction. The vilest aspersions are cast upon the morals of William III. Marlborough figures as "Count Fortunatus," and a filthy tale is told of his seduction at sixteen by Lady Castlemaine, and of the lavish bribes with which she kept him in her toils.

The book, which extended to four small volumes, was widely read, and passed through six editions in the ten years following its first publication. It is, apart from its malice, such a jumble of anachronisms and obvious mistakes that it was not taken seriously even by the particular kind of base public for whom such scribes cater in every age. We should not think it worth while to notice it here, but for the fact that Lord Macaulay, in his desire to insult and blacken the memory of the Duke of Marlborough, has transcribed whole passages, or such parts of them as were printable, into his famous

history. He of course rejects Mrs Manley as a witness against his hero William, and dismisses her and other low-class pamphleteers in terms of blistering scorn. Yet he accepts this same Mrs Manley as entirely credible and valid where Marlborough is concerned. She is his authority for much that he has written about Marlborough's loves and marriage. He incorporated these forgotten slanders verbatim in his stately pages, and set them rolling round the world.

John was certainly a success at Court, and his favour was not diminished by his smart uniform. Still, adolescence is a trying period both for the victim and his companions. In those days there was a feeling that young men about the Court should take their turn of service with the fleet or Army as gentlemen-volunteers. Still more was this opinion effective upon a young officer. Leave to serve abroad would readily be granted by his regiment, and all his friends and well-wishers would give their cordial approval. John found doctrine and prospect alike congenial.

Some time in 1668 he quitted the Court and sailed for Tangier. The gossip-mongers suggest that the Duchess of York herself had begun to show him undue attention: or, again, that he was getting rather old to be on such privileged terms with Lady Castlemaine. But there is no excuse for looking beyond the reasons which have been set forth. Such evidence as exists shows that his departure and prolonged absence were entirely in accordance with his own inclination. He went to Tangier, or at any rate he stayed there and in the Mediterranean for nearly three years, because he liked the life of adventure, and because the excitement of the petty warfare was refreshing after the endless glittering ceremonial of the Court. Few youths of spirit are content at eighteen with comforts or even caresses. They seek physical fitness, movement, and the comradeship of their equals under hard conditions. They seek distinction, not favour, and exile in manly independence.

Tangier, newly acquired as the dowry of Catharine of Braganza, was the scene, then as now, of constant fighting

with the Moors.¹ The House of Commons hated Tangier, and grudged its expense in speeches singularly modern. The King and his military and naval advisers—indeed, the cream of informed opinion—regarded it as far more important to the future strategy of England than had been the possession of the lately sold and lamented Dunkirk. Tangier was not only one of the gate-posts of the Mediterranean, but it was an important base for all the naval operations against the Algerian corsairs. These pirates pursued the policy of not being at peace with more than one or at most two of the European Powers at once. They preyed on the commerce of all the rest, capturing their ships and cargoes and selling the crews as slaves. As many as sixty or seventy galleys rowed by slaves sometimes harried the Mediterranean in a single year; and many were the merciless fights between them and the ships of the slowly rising Royal Navy of England. Tangier itself was a peculiar military proposition. It lived in a state of almost perpetual siege. The town was defended not only by walls, but by several lines of redoubts constructed of earth and palisades, protected by very deep ditches and held by garrisons of sometimes as many as two or three hundred men. On the desert plains between and before these strong points the Royal Dragoons paraded in constant presence of the enemy cavalry, and on occasion sallied out upon them at the charge.

We cannot fix with exactness the period in which John Churchill served at Tangier. There is, indeed, no contemporary evidence of his ever having been there. The episode is ignored in *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*. There is, however, a circumstantial account in Lediard (1733), sixty years after the event had occurred, of his being attached to the Tangier garrison. This has been freely accepted by all Marlborough's biographers, notably by Coxe, and perhaps receives some confirmation from Marlborough's letter to his wife of June 26, 1707,² in which he says :

The weather is so very hot and the dust so very great that I have this hour to myself, the officers not caring to be abroad till

¹ Cf. E. M. G. Routh, *Tangier* (1912).

² Printed in Coxe, chapter lviii.

the hour of orders obliges them to it. It is most certain that *when I was in Spain, in the month of August*, I was not more sensible of the heat than I am at this minute.

There is little doubt that Marlborough considered Tangier 'Spain.' If the story of his presence at Tangier is true, when was he there and for how long? It cannot have been earlier than September 1667, when he received his "pair of colours"; nor can it be later than the February of 1671, when he fought a duel in London. We may therefore assume that his service in Tangier covered the years 1668 to 1670.

He seems to have lived from eighteen to twenty the rough, care-free life of a subaltern officer engaged in an endless frontier guerrilla. That the conditions were by no means intolerable is shown by the following letter, written from Madrid in March 1670 to the Earl of Arlington by the Earl of Castlemaine, on his way back from Tangier

* At my arrival, I was never so surprized than to find so many officers so very well clad and fashioned that though I have been in most of the best garrisons of Europe I do not remember I ever yet saw the like, and which added to my admiration was that though necessaries are a great deal dearer, and all superfluities there four times the value of what they are in England, yet the Generality both of our Commanders and Soldiers lay up something, which argues much industry. . . .

For the Town itself (if the Mole be made) all the world sees it will, as it were, command the Mediterranean, by stopping its mouth; how quick a receipt it is for the Merchants with[in] any War with Spain, what a Bridle it will be of the Pirates of Barbary, as a Constant place of our own, for our men of War, with opportunities also of revictualling and fitting as if we were at home; which bears now no small proportion with the expense of an expedition; neither is it a little honour to the Crown to have a Nursery of its own for soldiers, without being altogether behold-ing to our Neighbours for their Education and breeding.¹

On the very day this letter was written there was signed also one of those infrequent contemporary documents which

¹ S.P., 94/56, ff. 94-94 v.

give us facts in Marlborough's youthful history. A Signet Office order of Charles II dated March 21, 1670, of which there are three copies in the Record Office,¹ runs as follows :

* Right trustie and Wellbeloved Counsellors, Wee greete you well. Whereas wee are informed that there is due unto Our trustie & Wellbeloved Servant Sr Winston Churchill Knt (late of Our Commissioners for ye Settlement of Our Kingdome of Ireland) an Arreare for his allowance for dyett and lodging whilst he was in Our service there amounting unto ye Summe of One hundred & forty pounds. And it having been represented to Us in favour of John Churchill sonne of ye sd Sr Winston that ye said summe so in arreare hath been bestowed upon him by his father for & towards his equippage & other expenses in ye employment he is now forthwith by our command to undertake on board ye Fleet in ye Mediterranean Seas.

Wee being graciously willing to give all due encouragement to ye forwardness & early affecons of ye sd John Churchill to our Service as also in justification of what is due to ye said Sr Winston Churchill as aforesaid have thought fitt hereby to Signifie Our pleasure to you accordingly. Our Will & pleasure is that immediately after your Receipt of these Our L(ett)ers you issue out & pay unto the said Sr Winston Churchill or his Assignes, Out of any our Treasure now in Yo(ur) hands the said Summe of One hundred & forty pounds in full satisfacon of the said Arrears so due from us aforesaid. (All prohibitions notwithstanding) wherewith Wee are graciously pleased in p̄ticular bounty to the said John Churchill upon this occasion to dispense.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this warrant. The English fleet in the Mediterranean was in 1670 engaged in an intermittent blockade of Algiers. Sir Thomas Allin was setting out with a squadron of fourteen ships to renew his blockade. An Admiralty regiment, or, as we should say, a 'Naval Brigade' or Division, was being recruited and embarked as marines for the operation. It seems certain that John obtained permission to exchange his service of the land for that of the sea, and was attached to the Algiers expedition of 1670. Whether he came home to England beforehand, or whether, as is possible, he joined the squadron when it or

¹ S.P., Signet Office, vii, 195, and S.P., 63/327, ff. 54-55.

part of it called at Tangier, is uncertain. We know that he required an outfit for the campaign and that his father bought it for him. The warrant clearly shows that both father and son had very little money at this time. If John then had been Lady Castlemaine's lover, and if the tales of his early subornation by her were true, so modest a sum as £140 would surely not have been a difficulty sufficient to be brought to the compassion of the King. It is also obvious from the terms of the warrant that he was not out of favour with the King. Charles II was going bankrupt in 1670, and the phrase "all prohibitions notwithstanding" shows that this sum of £140 was specially exempted from what was no doubt an almost general moratorium of cash payments from the Royal Exchequer.

The conclusions which we base upon this document—hitherto strangely unnoticed by historians—are confirmed by the significant negative evidence of Pepys. His *Diary* contains the fullest accounts of the fashionable scandals of the Court of Charles II. Nothing seems to be missed. He had as good opportunities as anyone else of knowing about such affairs. It is inconceivable that a notorious and outrageous intrigue between the Duke of York's page and the King's mistress, about which all tongues were wagging, should not have been recorded by him. But his voluble, engaging *Diary* is dumb on this subject. It stops short in May 1669, and a few years later Pepys began his great career as manager and virtual master of the Admiralty, about which few have ever troubled to read. Evidently before that date no whisper had reached his attentive ears.

John's experiences with the fleet are unrecorded. All we know is that in August 1670 Admiral Allin defeated a number of Algerian corsairs, and was afterwards relieved of his command. Surveying all the facts we have been able to marshal, we may accept the following conclusions: that Churchill, still penniless and heart-whole, quitted the Court in 1668, that he served at Tangier till 1670, that early in that year he sailed with the fleet against the pirates, and served for some months in the Mediterranean. Eagerly seeking adventure

by land or sea, he pulled all the strings he could to convey him to the scenes of action, and his zeal was noticed and well regarded in the highest circles.

So far all is well, and the conduct of our hero will command general approbation. We now approach a phase upon which the judgment of individuals and periods will vary. In all his journey Marlborough found two, and only two, love-romances. Two women, both extraordinary beings, both imperious, tempestuous personalities, both well-known historical figures, are woven successively into his life. Here and now the first appears. We have already made her acquaintance.

At the beginning of 1671 John Churchill, grown a man, bronzed by African sunshine, close-knit by active service and tempered by discipline and danger, arrived home from the Mediterranean. He seems to have been welcomed with widespread pleasure by the Court, and by none more than by Barbara, now become Duchess of Cleveland. She was twenty-nine and he twenty. They were already affectionate friends. The distant degree of cousinly kinship which had hitherto united them had sanctioned intimacy, and did not now prohibit passion. Affections, affinities, and attractions were combined. Desire walked with opportunity, and neither was denied. John almost immediately became her lover, and for more than three years this wanton and joyous couple shared pleasures and hazards. The cynical, promiscuous, sagacious-indulgent sovereign was outwitted or outfaced. Churchill was almost certainly the father of Barbara's last child,¹ a daughter, born on July 16, 1672, and the ties between them were not severed until the dawn of his love for Sarah Jennings in 1675.

It is an exaggeration to speak of Churchill as "rivalling the King in his nearest affection." After ten years Charles II was already tiring of the tantrums and divagations of the Duchess of Cleveland, and other attractions made their power

¹ Cf. G. S. Steinmann, *Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland*, p. 235, quoting Abel Boyer, *Annals*. See the plate facing p. 66.

felt. From 1671 onward the bonds which were to bind the King and the Duchess were their children, most of whom were undoubtedly his own. None the less, the intimacy of John and Barbara continued to cause Charles repeated annoyance, and their illicit loves, their adventures and escapades, were among the most eminent scandals of the English Court at this period.

We have two indications of John's whereabouts during this year.¹

News-letter from London

February 6, 1671

Yesterday was a duel between Mr Fenwick and Mr Churchill esquires who had for their seconds Mr Harpe and Mr Newport, son to my Lord Newport; it ended with some wounds for Mr Churchill, but no danger of life.

And again :

Sir Christopher Lyttelton to Lord Hatton

LANDGUARD

August 21, 1671

I have y^r Lordships of Augst 3d, in w^{ch} you give mee a worse account of Mr Bruce then by y^r former, and for w^{ch} I think you could not be too severe with him. His captaine has not had much better luck at home, for hee has bine lately engaged in a rencounter with young Churchill. I know not y^e quarrel; but Herbert rann Churchill twice through the arme, and Churchill him into y^e thigh, and, after, Herbert disarmed him. But w^{ht} is y^e worse, I heare y^t Churchill has so spoke of it, that the King and Duke are angry wth Herbert. I know not w^{ht} he has done to justifie himself.

Two of the adventures of the lovers are well known. The first is that, being surprised by Charles in the Duchess's bedroom, John saved her honour—or what remained of it—by jumping from the window, a considerable height, into the courtyard below. For this feat, delighted at his daring and address, she presented him with £5000.²

¹ C.S.P. (*Dom.*), 1671, p. 71. *Hatton Correspondence* (Camden Society), i, 66.

² Burnet (i, 475) describes this episode, but does not name Churchill. Cf. Chesterfield's *Letters*, i, 136, and *The New Atalantis*, i, 21 seq.



CHARLES II

Copy of a portrait by Sir Peter Lely
By permission of the Duke of Portland

The second anecdote is attributed to the French Ambassador, Barillon. The Duke of Buckingham, he says, gave a hundred guineas to one of his waiting-women to be well informed of the intrigue. He knew that Churchill would be one evening at a certain hour in Barbara's apartments. He brought the King to the spot. The lover was hidden in the Duchess's cupboard (she was not Duchess till 1670). After having prowled about the chamber the King, much upset, asked for sweets and liqueurs. His mistress declared that the key of the cupboard was lost. The King replied that he would break down the door. On this she opened the door, and fell on her knees on one side while Churchill, discovered, knelt on the other. The King said to Churchill, "Go; you are a rascal, but I forgive you because you do it to get your bread."¹

It is a good story, and the double-barrelled insult is very characteristic of Charles. But is it true? Barillon, who did not himself arrive in England till September 1677, probably got it from his predecessor, Courtin. He fixes the date as 1667. Burnet's story belongs to 1670. Here is a fine exposure of these gossips. There can be little doubt, as we have shown, that nothing of this kind can have occurred before 1671. It is therefore one of those good stories invented long afterwards and fastened, as so many are, on well-known figures.²

We are on much firmer ground when we come to money matters. The famous Lord Halifax in the intervals of statecraft conducted a rudimentary form of life insurance. The rates were attractive, for the lives of young gallants and soldiers—the prey of wars, duels, adventures, and disease—were precarious. At twenty-four John purchased from Lord Halifax for £4500 an annuity of £500 a year for life. It was a profitable investment. He enjoyed its fruits for nearly fifty years. It was the foundation of his immense fortune. Where did the money come from? No one can suggest any other source than Barbara. Was this, then, the £5000 that

¹ *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 137, f. 404.

² It may well be that these two stories are one, and that untrue.

she had given him when he leaped from the window, and if so what are we to think of the transaction? Some of Marlborough's defenders have disputed the facts. They point to the scanty evidence—contemporary gossip and a passing reference in one of Lord Chesterfield's letters. The Blenheim papers contain the actual receipt, which, since it has not seen the light of day for more than two hundred and fifty years, we present in facsimile on the opposite page.

The code of the seventeenth century did not regard a man's taking money from a rich mistress as necessarily an offence against honour. It was no more a bar to social success and worldly regard than are marriages for money in these modern times. But every one has been struck by the judicious foresight of the investment. Moralists have been shocked by the fact that John did not squander Barbara's gift in riotous living. Cards, wine, and other women would seem to be regarded by these logicians as more appropriate channels for the use of such funds. They treat the transaction as the aggravation of an infamy. It may well be true that no other man of twenty-four then alive in England would have turned this money into an income which secured him a modest but lifelong independence. The dread of poverty inculcated in his early days at Ashe may be the explanation. It may be that Barbara, knowing his haunting prepossession, resolved to free him from it, and that an annuity was the prescribed purpose of the gift. However this may be, there is the bond.

It is curious to see how the whole episode has been judged in different generations. Lediard gloated as eagerly as Lord Macaulay upon *The New Atalantis*, and like him extracted and adopted the spicy bits. But Lediard had a different object. Writing in 1733, he dwells with gusto upon these exploits and evidently thinks that they redound to the credit of his hero.¹

To relate all the Atchievements of our young Adventurer in the Cause of Venus, which were the Amusement of the Beau Mond, and furnish'd Matter of Discourse for the Gallant Assem-

¹ *Life of John, Duke of Marlborough*, i, 28-29.

Know all persons by these presents that I
 George Lord Viscount Halifax have on
 and before the day of the date of these presents
 received and had of John Churchill Esq.
 some and being appurtenant of S. Winston of
 Churwell of Greate Minors in the con-
 tury of Dorsett Eight the sum of
 foure thousand and five hundred
 pounds of lawfull money of England
 being the Consideration money of (and
 indented to be paid to mee by the said
 John Churchill in and by) two parts of
 Indentures bearing date with
 these presents and made or mentioned
 to be made between mee the said
 Viscount Halifax of the one part And
 the said John Churchill of the other
 part off and from which said sum of
 foure thousand and five hundred
 pounds the said George Viscount
 Halifax doe hereby release and
 discharge the said John Churchill his
 Executors and Administrators
 for ever by these presents In witness
 whereof the said George Lord Viscount
 Halifax have hereunto sett my hand &
 Seale the twentieth day of April One
 thousand six hundred Seventy and
 four . 1.

Sealed and delivered in
 the presence of

W. Ker
 John Trince
 John Bird
 Arnold Smith

Halifax



blies of those jovial Days, would carry me too far from the main Design of this Work.

Therewith he yields himself to the temptation with an appetite which sharpens as it feeds.

It was said, in those Times, that the handsomest of King Charles's Mistresses, being importuned, by a Gentleman of more Fortune than Discretion, to bestow the last Favour upon him ; She agreed to let him enjoy what he was so solicitous for, at the moderate Expence of £10,000 for one Night. This the enamour'd Fool paid down ; But, thinking to heighten the Pleasures of Venus, by those of Bacchus, took so large a Portion of the latter's Favour, that when the happy Hour came, he was not in a Capacity, to take Possession of the Jewel he had so dearly purchas'd. The Gallant, having met with this Disappointment thought the Lady would be too conscientious not to admit him, a second Time, to her Favours, when able to enjoy them, for the same Fee ; But she had the Modesty to insist on a new Bargain, and the same Sum over again. Surprized at the unreasonable Demand, Rage took Place of the Passion of Love, and the Gentleman, in a Fury, left her to satiate her Inclination for a more amiable Person, then justly call'd the Handsomest and most Agreeable Cavalier at Court. To him she gave the entire Sum left her by her Cully, as a Token of her future Favour, which he took better Care to deserve, and is supposed in the Sequel, to have had so large a Share of, as, in some Measure, laid the Foundation of his Fortune.

He proceeds to reinforce this scandalous narration by quoting Pope's imitation of Horace, written thirty years later :

Not so, who of Ten Thousand gull'd her Knight,
Then ask'd Ten Thousand for a second Night ;
The Gallant too, to whom she paid it down,
Liv'd to refuse that Mistress half a Crown.

It must have cost Macaulay a pang to reject, as he does, this culminating calumny. It fitted so well the scenario he had set himself to prepare. It was exactly the feature he required for his villain. But the fact that the Duchess of Cleveland died a wealthy woman and was never in want of money, still less of half a crown, was an obstacle which even his enthusiasm could not surmount. So he put it aside, and

paraded his sacrifice as an evidence of his sense of justice and responsibility.

Archdeacon Coxe, writing in 1819, deals far more decorously with the matter :

So handsome and accomplished an officer could not fail to be entangled in the gallantries of a dissipated court. But we spare the reader the detail of these irregularities, which are doubtless exaggerated by the licentious pens of that and subsequent times. We shall barely advert to an anecdote which has obtained credit relative to a connexion with the duchess of Cleveland, whom he is accused of treating afterwards with the basest ingratitude. The falsity of this tale will be sufficiently shown by the observation that it is originally drawn from so impure and questionable a source as *The New Atalantis*. Admitting, however, that Colonel Churchill might have experienced the liberality of the duchess, we need not seek for the cause in an intercourse of gallantry, since he had a strong claim to her protection from affinity, being nearly related to her on the side of his mother, who was her cousin.

Whatever may have been the conduct of Colonel Churchill during the fervour of youth, and amidst the temptations of a dissolute court, his irregularities soon yielded to the influence of a purer passion, which recalled him from licentious connexions, and gave a colour to his future life.¹

It was reserved for Macaulay, writing in 1858 in the pristine vigour of Victorian propriety, to add a lurid colour to this already sharply defined woodcut. "He was," says Macaulay, "thrifty in his very vices, and levied ample contributions on ladies enriched by the spoils of more liberal lovers." "He was kept by the most profuse, imperious, and shameless of harlots." "He subsisted upon the infamous wages bestowed upon him by the Duchess of Cleveland." He was "insatiable of riches." He was "one of the few who have in the bloom of youth loved lucre more than wine or women, and who have, at the height of greatness, loved lucre more than power or fame." "All the precious gifts which nature had lavished upon him he valued chiefly for what they would fetch." "At

¹ i, 9-10.

twenty he made money of his beauty and his vigour ; at sixty he made money of his genius and glory.”¹

Charles Bradlaugh, another hostile historian, under some provocation from Lord Randolph Churchill, who had described his constituents as “the dregs of the gutter,” developed these themes in the eighties with somewhat more restraint.²

Macaulay’s taunts did not go unanswered. In 1864 a writer of extraordinary power, but hardly ever read, published a book, long out of print, the staple of which is a series of essays particularly challenging not only the accuracy, but the good faith of the famous historian. “Paget’s Examen” sums up the story of Churchill’s youth with a knowledge, justice, and force which are insurpassable.

Plunged at a very early age into the dissipations of the Court of Charles II, his remarkably handsome person and his engaging manners soon attracted notice. For the loathsome imputation cast upon him by Lord Macaulay, that he availed himself of these advantages for the purposes which he intimates—that he bore to the wealthy and licentious ladies of the Court the relation which Tom Jones did to Lady Bellaston—we can discover no foundation even in the scandalous chronicles of those scandalous days. That he did not bring to the Court of Charles the virtue which made the overseer of Potiphar’s household famous in that of Pharaoh, must be freely admitted. The circumstances of his intrigue with the Duchess of Cleveland are recorded in the pages of Grammont. Never, says Hamilton, were her charms in greater perfection than when she cast her eyes on the young officer of the Guards. That Churchill, in the bloom of youth, should be insensible to the passion which he had awakened in the breast of the most beautiful woman of that voluptuous Court, was hardly to be expected. He incurred, in consequence, the displeasure of the King, who forbade him the Court. Far be it from us to be the advocates of lax morality ; but Churchill must be judged by the standard of the day. He corrupted no innocence ; he invaded no domestic peace. The Duchess of Cleveland was not only the most beautiful, but she was also the most

¹ *History*, i, 460-462 ; iii, 437-438.

² C. Bradlaugh, *John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough* (1884).

licentious and the most inconstant of women. From the King down to Jacob Hall she dispensed her favours according to the passion or the fancy of the moment. She was as liberal of her purse as of her person, and Marlborough, a needy and handsome ensign, no doubt shared both. But it is a mere misuse of language to charge Churchill with receiving "infamous wages" or to say that he was "kept by the most profuse, imperious, and shameless of harlots" because he entertained a daring and successful passion for the beautiful mistress of the King.¹

Between these various accounts the reader must choose according to his temperament and inclination. We have presented the facts, edifying or otherwise, as they are known. They can best be judged in the war-time setting which further chapters afford.

¹ J. Paget, *The New "Examen,"* No. I, "Lord Macaulay and the Duke of Marlborough" (1861), reprinted in *Paradoxes and Puzzles* (1874).



BARBARA, DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND, AND HER DAUGHTER BARBARA
Henri Gascars

By permission of Viscount Dillon

CHAPTER IV

THE EUROPE OF CHARLES II

(1667-1672)

IT is fitting to turn from the scraps and oddities which, pieced together, form our only record of Churchill's youth to survey the vast, stately European scene wherein he now began to move and was one day to shine.

The supreme fact upon the Continent in the latter half of the seventeenth century was the might of France. Her civil wars were over. All internal divisions had been effaced, and Louis XIV reigned over a united nation of eighteen or nineteen million souls possessed of the fairest region on the globe. Feudalism, with its local warriors and their armed retainers, had at length been blown away by gunpowder, and as wars were frequent, standing armies had arisen in all the states of Europe. The possession of organized regular troops, paid, disciplined, trained by the central Government, was the aim of all the rulers, and in the main the measure of their power. This process had in the course of a few generations obliterated or reduced to mere archaic survivals the Parliamentary and municipal institutions of France. In different ways similar effects had followed the same process in other Continental countries. Everywhere sovereignty had advanced with giant strides. The peoples of Europe passed out of a long confusion into an age of autocracies in full panoply against all foes from within or from without.

But for the storm-whipped seas which lapped the British islands, our fortunes would have followed the road upon which our neighbours had started. England had not, however, the same compulsive need for a standing army as the land Powers. She stood aloof, moving slowly and lagging behind the martial throng. In the happy nick of time her

Parliament grew strong enough to curb the royal power and to control the armed forces, and she thus became the cradle, as she is still the citadel, of free institutions throughout the world.

There she lay, small, weak, divided, and almost unarmed. The essence of her domestic struggle forbade a standing army. Scotland and Ireland lay, heavy embarrassments and burdens, on her shoulders or at her flank. Although there was much diffused well-being throughout the country, very little money could be gathered by the State. Here again the conditions of the internal struggle kept the executive weak. The whole population of England—their strength thus latent and depressed, their energies dispersed, their aim unfocused—attained little more than five millions.

Yet upon the other side of the Channel, only twenty-one miles across the dancing waves, rose the magnificent structure of the French monarchy and society. One hundred and forty thousand soldiers in permanent pay, under lifelong professional officers, constituted the peace-time force of France. Brilliant, now famous, captains of war or fortification, Turenne, Condé, Vauban; master organizers like Louvois; trainers like Martinet (his name a household word)—forged or wielded this splendid instrument of power. Adroit, sagacious, experienced Foreign Ministers and diplomatists urged the march of French aggrandisement. Financiers and trade Ministers as wise and instructed as Colbert reached out for colonies bound by exclusive commercial dealings, or consolidated the expanding finances of the most modern, the most civilized, and the strongest society.

Nor were the glories of France confined to the material sphere. The arts flourished in a long summer. In the latter half of the century French was becoming not only the universal language of diplomacy outside the Holy Roman Empire, but also that of polite society and even of literature. The French drama was performed and French poetry read, the names of Molière, Racine, Boileau were honoured, throughout the cultured cities of the world. French styles of architecture, of painting, even of music, were imitated in every

Court in Germany. Even the Dutch, who were contributing notably to the progress of civilization in the financial, industrial, and domestic arts, accused themselves under William of Orange of being "debauched by French habits and customs."¹ French Court theologians, their wits sharpened first by the Jansenist and secondly by the Gallican controversy, rivalled those of Rome. French Catholicism, adorned by figures like Fénelon or Bossuet, was the most stately, imposing, and persuasive form of the Old Faith which had yet confronted the Reformation. The conquest, planned and largely effected, was not only military and economic, but religious, moral, and intellectual. It was the most magnificent claim to world dominion ever made since the age of the Antonines. And at the summit there reigned in unchallenged splendour for more than half a century a masterful, competent, insatiable, hard-working egoist, born to a throne.

Since the days of Queen Elizabeth and the Spanish Armada Spain had been the bugbear of Protestant England. Many devout families, suffering all things, still adhered to the Catholic faith. But deep in the hearts of the English people from peer to peasant memories of Smithfield burned with a fierce glow which any breeze could rouse into flame. And now Spain was in decrepitude, insolvent, incoherent, tracing her genealogies and telling her beads. Her redoubtable infantry, first conquered nearly thirty years ago by Condé at Rocroi, had vanished. In their place, alike in the Spanish Netherlands, which we now know as Belgium and Luxembourg, and in the New World, stood decaying garrisons, the mockery of soldiers. The Spanish harbours were filled with rotting ships; the Spanish treasury was bare. The once-proud empire of Charles V, irreparably exhausted by over a century of almost continuous war, had fallen a victim to religious mania. Layer upon layer of superstition and ceremonial encrusted the symbols of departed power. Cruelties ever more fantastic enforced a dwindling and crumbling authority. There remained an immense pride, an ancient and secure aristocracy, the title-deeds of half the outer world,

¹ P. Blok, *History of the People of the Netherlands*, vol. iv, chapters xii, xix.

a despotic Church, and a throne occupied by a sickly, sterile child who might die any day, leaving no trace behind.

Gradually the fear of Spain had faded from the English mind. In Oliver Cromwell, a man of conservative temperament, born under Queen Elizabeth, the old prejudice obstinately survived. But when, in 1654, he proposed to join France in war against Spain, his council of Roundhead generals surprised him by their resistance. Left to themselves, they would probably have taken the opposite side. The authority of the Lord Protector prevailed, and his Ironside redcoats stormed the Spanish positions upon the sand-dunes by Dunkirk. Wide circles of instructed English opinion regarded these antagonisms as old-fashioned and obsolete. To them the new menace to English faith, freedom, and trade was France. This Battle of the Dunes marked the end of the hundred years' struggle with Spain. Henceforth the dangers and difficulties of England would not arise from Spanish strength, but from Spanish weakness. Henceforth the mounting power of France would be the main pre-occupation of Englishmen.

Nearest akin in race, religion, and temperament to the English, the Dutch were their sharpest rivals upon the seas, in trade and colonization. It is said that at this time one-half of the population of Holland gained their livelihood from commerce, industry, and shipping.¹ A tough, substantial race, welded by their struggles against Spanish tyranny, dwelling, robust and acquisitive, under embattled oligarchies, the Dutch clashed with the English at many points. There was the Dutch navy, with its memories of Tromp and his broom "to sweep the English from the seas." There were the dangers of Dutch competition in the colonies and in trade as far as the coasts of India, in the East, and as far as New Amsterdam—in 1664 renamed New York—across the Atlantic. Thus the war which Cromwell had waged against Holland had broken out again in the earlier years of Charles II. Its course was ignominious to England. The sailors of the Royal Navy were in those days paid only at the end of a three

¹ De la Court, *Political Maxims of the State of Holland*.

or four years' commission. The crews who came home in 1666 received their pay warrants, called tickets, for three years' hard service. Such was the poverty of the Crown that when these were presented at the Naval Pay Office no payment could be made. Conceiving themselves intolerably defrauded, some of the sailors committed an unpardonable crime. They made their way to Holland and piloted the Dutch fleet through the intricate approaches of the Thames estuary.¹ Several of the laid-up English ships in the Medway and the Thames were burned, and the rumble of the Dutch guns was plainly heard in London. But the lack of money forbade effectual reprisals. Charles and his subjects swallowed the insult, and peace was made in 1667. A great bitterness continued between the countries, and the claim of England to the unquestioned sovereignty of the Narrow Seas, though recognized by the peace treaty, accorded ill with the actual incidents of the naval war. "With the Treaty of Breda," says the historian of the United Netherlands,² "began the most glorious period of the Republic."

The relations between England and Holland followed a chequered course, and many years were to pass before their grievous quarrels about trade and naval supremacy were finally thrust into the background before the ever-growing French power. It is easy nowadays to say that Charles "should have marched with the Dutch and fought the French" or "marched with the Protestants and fought the Papists." But the Dutch attitude was oblique and baffling, and many great Catholic states were opposed to France. Holland was then ruled by John de Witt and his brother Cornelius. The De Witts were friendly to France. John de Witt believed that by astute conciliation he could come to terms with Louis XIV. Louis had always a potent bribe for the Dutch in the carrying trade of France, on which they thrived. Had not France been the friend, and even champion, of the Republic during its birth-throes? And what was Belgium, that fief of Spain, but a convenient, useful buffer-

¹ Callender, *The Naval Side of British History*, pp. 116, 117.

² P. Blok, *op. cit.*

state whose partition, if inevitable, offered large, immediate gains to both its neighbours. There were, indeed, two Hollands—the pacific, and at times the Francophile, Holland of John de Witt and Amsterdam, and the Holland which adhered to the memory and lineage of William the Silent, and saw in his frail, spirited, already remarkable descendant the prince who would sustain its cause. No Government, French or English, could tell which of these Hollands would be supreme in any given situation.

These uncertainties arose in part from the dubious, balancing attitude of what we now call Prussia. The Great Elector of Brandenburg ruled the main northern mass of Protestant Germany. But upon his western bounds along the whole course of the Rhine, and stretching southward to Bavaria and the Danube, lay a belt of powerful minor states, partly Protestant, partly Catholic in sympathy, whose accession to the one side or the other might be decisive in the balance of power. Beyond Prussia, again, lay Poland, a large, unkempt, slatternly kingdom, ranging from the Baltic to the Ukraine, still partly in feudalism, with an elective monarchy, the trophy of foreign intrigue, and a constitution which might have been designed for a cauldron of domestic broil. “Ceaselessly gnawed by aristocratic lawlessness,”¹ its throne a prey to all the princes and adventurers of Europe, its frontiers ravaged, its magnates bribed, Poland was the sport of Europe. There was to be an interlude of glorious independence under John Sobieski; but for the rest Louis XIV, the Emperor, and the Great Elector tirelessly spun their rival webs about the threatened state, and with each candidature for its throne put their competing influences to the test. No wonder the Great Elector, until a final phase which we shall presently reach, had to follow an equivocal policy.

On the eastern flank of Poland lay the huge, sprawling Muscovy Empire, until recent times called Russia, still almost barbarous and perpetually torn by the revolt of the Cossacks against the Tsar. Moscow was ravaged by the Cossack

¹ R. Nisbet Bain, *Slavonic Europe*.

Hetman Stenka, who also brought "unspeakable horrors" upon an "oppressed peasantry."¹ The possibilities of contact with Western civilization were blocked by Sweden and Poland, which together also impeded Russia from any outlet on to the Baltic. In the south the Turks shut it out from the Black Sea. The Tsar Alexis (1645-76), a peace-loving and conscientious man, entrusted a reforming patriarch, the monk Nikon, with most of the affairs of State during the early part of his reign. Later, in 1671, Stenka was captured and quartered alive, and when Alexis died, although no one yet foresaw the emergence of these eastern barbarians as a Western Power, the way lay open for the work of Peter the Great.

In the north of Europe Sweden, the ancient rival of Denmark, was the strongest Power, and aimed at making the Baltic a Swedish lake. At this time the Swedish realm included Finland, Ingria, Esthonia, Livonia, and West Pomerania; and the house of Vasa had traditional designs on Denmark and parts of Poland. The hardy, valiant race of Swedes had impressed upon all Europe the startling effects of a well-trained, warlike professional army. For a spell in the Thirty Years War Gustavus Adolphus had overthrown the troops of every Central European state. But Gustavus and his victories now lay in the past. The chief desire of Prussia was to win Pomerania from the Swedish Crown. Soon, in the battle of Fehrbellin (1675), the Great Elector with his Prussian troops was to overthrow the famous army of Sweden. The antagonism between the two countries was keen and open. Only the unfailing strength of France saved Pomerania for a time from Prussian absorption. Although the bias of Sweden was towards Protestantism, no Dutch or German statesman in the last quarter of the seventeenth century could ever exclude the possibility that her doughty soldiery would be bought by France, or rallied to her cause. All these baffling potential reactions were well comprehended at Whitehall in the closet of King Charles II.

¹ R. Nisbet Bain, *op. cit.*, for this paragraph.

Continuing our progress, we reach the domains of the Holy Roman Empire. This organism of Central Europe, "the survival of a great tradition and a grandiose title,"¹ signified not territory but only a sense of membership. The member states covered roughly modern Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Belgium. The ruler was chosen for life by the hereditary Electors of seven states. The Hapsburgs, as sovereigns of Austria, laying claim to Silesia, Bohemia, and Hungary, were the most powerful candidates, and in practice became the hereditary bearers of the ceremonial office of Emperor.²

Austria proper and the Hapsburg dynasty were deeply Catholic; not violent, aggressive, or, except in Hungary, proselytizing, but dwelling solidly and sedately in spiritual loyalty to the Pope. Then, as in our own age, the Hapsburgs were represented by a sovereign who reigned for fifty troublous years over an empire already racked by the stresses which two centuries later were, amid world disaster, to rend it in pieces. Confronted and alarmed by the growing power and encroachments of France, at variance often with Prussia, Vienna had fearful preoccupations of its own. The Turk under fanatical Sultans still launched in the south-east of Europe that thrust of conquest which in earlier periods had been successively hurled back from France and Spain. At any time the Ottoman armies, drawing recruits and supplies from all those subjugated Christian peoples we now call the Balkan States, might present themselves in barbaric invasion at the gates of Vienna. And there were always the Magyars of Hungary, always in revolt. In general, the divided princes of Germany faced the united strength of France, and Austria struggled for life against the Turk; but the whole vague confederacy recognized common dangers and foes, and the majestic antagonisms of Bourbons and Hapsburgs were the main dividing line of Europe.

Italy in the seventeenth century was merely a geographical

¹ *The Cambridge Modern History*, v, 338.

² In this account we shall use 'the Empire,' 'Austria,' and 'the Court at Vienna' as more or less interchangeable terms.

expression. In the north Savoy (Piedmont) was brought out of its obscurity at the beginning of the century by the genius of Charles Emmanuel I (1580-1630). Afterwards it poised precariously between France and the Empire, deserting them both in turn according to the apparent fortunes of war. It has been said that the geographical position of Savoy, "the doorkeeper of the Alps," made its rulers treacherous. At best they could only preserve themselves and their country from ruin by miracles of diplomatic alternation.

Such were the unpromising and divided components of a Europe in contrast with which the power and ambitions of France arose in menacing splendour. Such were the factors and forces amid which Charles II had to steer the fortunes of his kingdom.

The nineteenth-century historians, writing mainly in the triumphant serenity of the Victorian era, did not make proper allowance for the weak and precarious plight of our country in the period with which we are now concerned. They thought it sufficient to set forth the kind of policy which the opinion of their day would approve, and they judged severely every divergence from it. Particularly they inculcated the virtues of strong, plain, straightforward conduct, and pointed their censure upon deceit, intrigue, vacillation, double-dealing, and bad faith. Upon this there must, of course, be general agreement. It would have been possible for England in 1660 to take a more dignified course through all her perils and to solve the problems of Europe, if only she had at that time possessed the relative power and resources she commanded two centuries later.

The politics of a weak and threatened state cannot achieve the standards open to those who enjoy security and wealth. The ever-changing forms of the dangers by which they are oppressed impose continuous shifts and contradictions, and many manœuvres from which pride and virtue alike recoil. England in the seventeenth century was little better placed than were Balkan states like Roumania or Bulgaria, when in the advent or convulsion of Armageddon they found themselves bid for or struck at by several mighty empires. We

had to keep ourselves alive and free, and we did so. It is by no means sure that plain, honest, downright policies, however laudable, would have succeeded. The oak may butt the storm, but the reeds bow and quiver in the gale and also survive.

It is a mistake to judge English foreign policy from 1667 to 1670, from the Triple Alliance with Holland against France to the Secret Treaty of Dover with France against Holland, as if it meant simply alternating periods of good and evil, of light and darkness, and of the influence of Sir William Temple as against that of the Duchess of Orleans. In fact, both the problems and the controls were continuous and the same, and our policy rested throughout in the same hands, in those of Charles II and his Minister Arlington. Although devoid of both faith and illusions, they were certainly not unintelligent, nor entirely without patriotic feeling. The invasion of Belgium by Louis XIV in the late summer of 1667 confronted them both with a situation of the utmost perplexity. At this stage in his life, at any rate, Charles desired to play an independent part in Europe, while Arlington, with his Spanish sympathies and training and his Dutch wife, was positively anti-French. Their first impulse was to resist the invasion of Belgium.

Strange indeed why this patch of land should exercise such compelling influence upon our unsophisticated ancestors! Apparently in 1667 they forgot or expunged the burning of their battleships in the Medway and Thames and all the passions of hard-fought naval battles because France was about to invade Belgium. Why did Belgium count so much with them? Two hundred and fifty years later we saw the manhood of the British Empire hastening across all the seas and oceans of the world to conquer or die in defence of this same strip of fertile, undulating country about the mouth of the Scheldt. Every one felt he had to go, and no one asked for logical or historical explanations. But then, with our education, we understood many things for which convincing verbal arguments were lacking. So did our ancestors at this time. The Court, the Parliament, the

City, the country gentlemen, were all as sure in 1668 that Belgium must not be conquered by the greatest military power on the Continent as were all parties and classes in the British Empire in August 1914. A mystery veiling an instinct!

If resistance to France were possible, still more if it were profitable, the King and Arlington were prepared to make an effort. They sounded the Courts of Europe: but the replies which they received from every quarter were universally discouraging. Spain was utterly incapable of defending her assaulted province. Without English or Dutch shipping she could not even reach it. Yet voluntarily Spain would not yield an inch. The Dutch would not attack France. If strongly supported, they would seek to limit the French territorial gains, but would agree to many of them, and all at the expense of Spain. The Emperor, whatever his Ambassador in London might say, seemed curiously backward. He would make no offensive alliance, least of all with heretics. In fact, as we now know, he was during these very months framing a secret treaty with France for the future partition of the whole Spanish Empire. The Great Elector would not move without subsidies which the Dutch would not and the Spanish could not give him. He was nervous of Sweden, and if the French gave him a free hand in Poland he would not oppose their progress in the west. Truly a depressing prospect for a coalition against the dominating, centralized might of France, wielded by a single man.

In a spirit which it is easy to call 'cold-blooded' and 'cynical' Charles and Arlington next examined the possibility of persuading France to let England share in her winnings, in return for English support in a war against Holland. Here they encountered a sharp rebuff. Louis, who hoped to obtain Belgium without coming to actual war with Holland, was not prepared to barter Spanish colonies against an English alliance, or still less against English neutrality. Both alternatives having thus been unsentimentally explored, Charles, with natural and obvious misgivings, took his decision to oppose France. He sent Sir William Temple to The Hague

to make the famous Triple Alliance between England, Holland, and Sweden. The two Governments—for Sweden was a mere mercenary—entered upon it with limited and different objectives, but both sought to extort the favour of France by the threat of war. The English ruling circle hoped to win the French alliance by teaching Louis XIV not to despise England; the Dutch thought they could still retain the friendship of France by compelling Spain to a compromise. Perverse as were the motives, flimsy as was the basis, the result emerged with startling force. Louis saw himself confronted by a Northern league, and simultaneously Arlington brought about a peace between Spain and Portugal which freed the Spanish forces for a more real resistance. The consequences were swift and impressive. The shadow of the Spanish succession fell across the world. Louis, by his aggression upon that Belgian soil so strangely sacred, had called into being in phantom outline the beginnings of the Grand Alliance which was eventually to lay him low. He recoiled from the apparition. By his Partition Treaty of 1668 with the Emperor he had assured himself by merely waiting future gains throughout the whole Spanish Empire incomparably greater than those which might now be won by serious war. He could afford to be patient. Recalling his armies, silencing the protests of his generals, he retreated within his bounds, content for the time being with the acquisition of Lille, Tournai, Armentières, and other fortresses that put Belgium at his mercy. In April 1668, under the pressure and guarantee of the Triple Alliance, France and Spain consequently signed the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

We now approach days fatal to the house of Stuart. The national foreign policy attempted in 1668 rested upon diverse motives and paper guarantees. The Triple Alliance must succumb to any strain or temptation. Its partners were bound to protect the *status quo* in Belgium by expeditionary forces in the event of aggression; for this they looked, and in vain, to Spanish subsidies. They were still divided by their old hatreds and recent injuries, by their ceaseless hostilities in the East Indies and in Guiana, and in their rivalry of

the Channel. Charles, whatever his subjects might feel, had never forgiven the burning of his ships in the Medway. He hated the Dutch, and though he had been forced by events to side with them for a while and they with him, he yearned for a day when he could unite himself to France. In 1669 he began with Croissy, the French Ambassador, negotiations which reached their fruition in 1670.

Louis's sister-in-law, Duchess of Orleans—the "Madame" of the French Court—was also Charles's sister and his "beloved Minette." She was in the final phase the agent of France. Romance, as well as history, has played around this delightful, tragic figure, so suddenly decisive, so swiftly extinguished. No one stood so high in the love and respect of both monarchs. They cherished her personality: they admired her mind. She was to Charles the purest and deepest affection of his life. Louis realized only too late what he had lost in not making her his Queen. Minette loved both her native and adopted countries, and longed to see them united; but her heart was all for England's interests, as she misunderstood them, and for the Old Faith, to which she was devoutly attached. She presented and pleaded with all her wit and charm the case for an accommodation—nay, an alliance with the Sun King. Why condemn England to an endless, desperate struggle against overwhelming force? Why not accept the friendly hand sincerely, generously extended, and share the triumph and the prize? With France and England united, success was sure, and all the kingdoms of the world would lie in fee. It often happens that when great projects have been brought to maturity, personal touch is needed to set them in action. Minette came to England in the summer of 1670, bringing in her train another charmer, who also was destined to play her part—Louise de K  roualle. "Madame's" husband, jealous of her political power and of his own eclipse, grudged every day of the Princess's absence from the home he had made odious with his minions. But Charles welcomed her with unrestrained joy. He met her with his Navy, and for a few sunlit days the English Court made picnic revel at Dover. Louis awaited results in eager

suspense. They were all he could desire. Minette bore with her back to France—signed, sealed, and delivered—the Secret Treaty. She returned to perish almost immediately of a mysterious illness. She left as her legacy and life's achievement an instrument ruinous to all she prized.

By the Secret Treaty of Dover Charles agreed to join with Louis in an attack on Holland which aimed at nothing less than the destruction of the United Provinces as a factor in Europe, and to take all measures needful to that end. Louis agreed to respect the integrity of Belgium; to place in British keeping much of the coastline of conquered Holland, including the isle of Walcheren, with its valuable ports of Sluys and Cadsand, and the mouths of the Scheldt. Every safeguard was furnished to English naval requirements and colonial ambition.¹ The mastery of the seas, the command of the Dutch outlets, and the exploitation of Asia and the Americas were inestimable temptations. For the young Stadtholder, William of Orange, a prince of Stuart blood, now just twenty, a dignified, if restricted, sphere would be reserved. He might reign as hereditary sovereign over the truncated domains of the former Dutch Republic, for which his great-grandfather William the Silent had battled with all that his life could give. Next there was to be money. Large subsidies, sufficient to make King Charles with his hereditary revenues almost independent in times of peace of his contumacious Parliament, would be provided. Money, very handy for mistresses and Court expenses, but also absolutely necessary to restore and maintain the strength of the Royal Navy, now decaying in its starved dockyards! Such were the secular clauses. But the pact contained what in those days was even graver matter. Charles was to try persistently and faithfully, by every means at his disposal, to bring his subjects back to the Catholic faith. Full allowance would be made for the obvious difficulties of such a task; but the effort was to be continuous and loyal. In any case, not only French money, but French troops were to be available to secure the English

¹ Lingard, *History of England*, vol. vi, Appendix.

monarchy against the anger of Parliament or the revolt of the nation.

Such was the hideous bargain, struck by so fair a hand, upon which the execration of succeeding generations has fastened. Far be it from us to seek to reverse that verdict of history which every British heart must acclaim. It would not, however, have been difficult to state a case at Charles II's council board against any whole-hearted espousal of Dutch interests, nor to have pleaded and even justified a temporizing opportunist policy towards France, deceitful though it must be. "We cannot commit ourselves to Holland; at any moment she may outbid us with France. Spain is futile and penniless. Alone we cannot face the enmity of the Great King. Let us take his money to build our fleet, and wait and see what happens." As for religion, Charles had learned in a hard school the will-power of Protestant England. Whatever his own leanings to the Catholic faith, all his statecraft showed that he would never run any serious risk for the sake of reconverting the nation. *Manceuvre*, fence, and palter as he might, he always submitted, and always meant to submit, with expedition to the deep growl of his subjects and to the authority of their inexpugnable institutions.

The Secret Treaty of Dover was handled personally by Louis, Charles, and their intermediary, Minette. But, of course, Colbert and Croissy had long studied its terms, and in England Arlington's support was soon found indispensable. As the protocol began to take shape first Arlington and then Clifford and the rest of the Cabal were invited to approve its secular provisions. It was perhaps less of a turn-about for Arlington than it appeared on the surface, and we cannot measure the slow, persistent pressures to which he yielded. Ministers in those days considered themselves the servants of the King, in the sense of being bound to interpret his will up to the point of impeachment, and sometimes beyond it. The whole Cabal endorsed such parts of the treaty as were communicated to them. The religious plot—it deserves no other

name—was locked in the royal breast. James had not been much consulted in the negotiations, but he learned all that had been done with an inexpressible joy. Most especially he admired the religious clauses. Here more clearly than ever before he saw the blessed hands of the Mother of God laid upon the tormented world.

If anyone in 1672 computed the relative forces of France and England, he could only feel that no contest was possible; and the apparent weakness and humiliation of the pensioner island was aggravated by the feeble, divided condition of Europe. No dreamer, however romantic, however remote his dreams from reason, could have foreseen a surely approaching day when, by the formation of mighty coalitions and across the struggles of a generation, the noble colossus of France would lie prostrate in the dust, while the small island, beginning to gather to itself the empires of India and America, stripping France and Holland of their colonial possessions, would emerge victorious, mistress of the Mediterranean, the Narrow Seas, and the oceans. Aye, and carry forward with her, intact and enshrined, all that peculiar structure of law and liberty, all her own inheritance of learning and letters, which are to-day the treasure of the most powerful family in the human race.

This prodigy was achieved by conflicting yet contributory forces, and by a succession of great islanders and their noble foreign comrades or guides. We owe our salvation to the sturdy independence of the House of Commons and to its creators, the aristocracy and country gentlemen. We owe it to our hardy tars and bold sea-captains, and to the quality of a British Army as yet unborn. We owe it to the inherent sanity and vigour of the political conceptions sprung from the genius of the English race. But those forces would have failed without the men to use them. For the quarter of a century from 1688 to 1712 England was to be led by two of the greatest warriors and statesmen in all history: William of Orange, and John, Duke of Marlborough. They broke the military power of France, and fatally weakened her

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economic and financial foundations. They championed the Protestant faith, crowned Parliamentary institutions with triumph, and opened the door to an age of reason and freedom. They reversed the proportions and balances of Europe. They turned into new courses the destinies of Asia and America. They united Great Britain, and raised her to the rank she holds to-day.

CHAPTER V

ARMS

(1672-1673)

THERE are two main phases in the military career of John, Duke of Marlborough. In the first, which lasted four years, he rose swiftly from ensign to colonel by his conduct and personal qualities and by the impression he made on all who met him in the field. In the second, during ten campaigns he commanded the main army of the Grand Alliance with infallibility. An interval of more than a quarter of a century separates these two heroic periods. From 1671 to 1675 he exhibited all those qualities which were regarded as the forerunners in a regimental officer of the highest military distinction. He won his way up from grade to grade by undoubted merit and daring. But thereafter was a desert through which he toiled and wandered. A whole generation of small years intervened. He was like young men in the Great War who rose from nothing to the head of battalions and brigades, and then found life suddenly contract itself to its old limits after the Armistice. His sword never rusted in its sheath. It was found bright and sharp whenever it was needed, at Sedgemoor, at Walcourt, or in Ireland. There it lay, the sword of certain victory, ready for service whenever opportunity should come.

"Everybody agreed," wrote Anthony Hamilton, "that the man who was the favourite of the King's mistress and brother to the Duke's was starting well and could not fail to make his fortune." But the influence of royal concubines was not the explanation of the rise of Marlborough. That rise was gradual, intermittent, and long. He was a professional soldier. "And," wrote the old Duchess at the end of her life,

I think it is more Honour to rise from the lowest Step to the greatest, than, as is the fashion now, to be Admirals without

ever having seen Water but in a Bason, or to make Generals that never saw any action of war.¹

By the time he arrived at the highest command he was passing the prime of life, and older than many of the leading generals of the day. The early success and repeated advancement which this chapter records were followed by lengthy intervals of stagnation. Arabella and Barbara had long ceased to count with him or anyone else, while he was still regarded as a subordinate figure, when he had yet to make and remake his whole career. Continual checks, grave perplexities, extreme hazards, disgrace and imprisonment, constant skilful services, immense tenacity, perseverance and self-restraint, almost unerring political judgment, all the arts of the courtier, politician, and diplomatist, marked his middle life. For many long years his genius and recognized qualities seemed unlikely to carry him through the throng of securely established notabilities who then owned the fulness of the earth. At twenty-four he was a colonel. He was fifty-two before he commanded a large army.

In 1672 the slumbering Treaty of Dover awoke in the realm of action. Louis, having perfected his plans to the last detail, suddenly, without cause of quarrel, made his cavalry swim the Rhine and poured his armies into Holland. At the same time England also declared war upon the Dutch. The States-General, de Witt and his Amsterdammers, taken by surprise, were unable to stem the advance of 120,000 French troops, armed for the first time with the new weapon of the bayonet. Cities and strongholds fell like ninepins. The Dutch people, faced with extermination, set their despairing hopes upon William of Orange. The great-grandson of William the Silent did not fail them. He roused and animated their tough, all-enduring courage. John de Witt and his brother were torn to pieces by a frenzied mob in the streets of The Hague. William uttered the deathless battle-cry,

¹ "Some Instructions to the Historians for beginning the Duke of Marlborough's History," by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough (Spencer MSS., 1744). See Appendix, II, for full text.

"We can die in the last ditch." The sluices in the dykes were opened; the bitter waters rolled in ever-widening deluge over the fertile land. Upon the wide inundation the fortified towns seemed to float like arks of refuge. All military operations became impossible. The French armies withdrew in bewilderment. Holland, her manhood, her navy, and her hero-Prince preserved their soul impregnable.

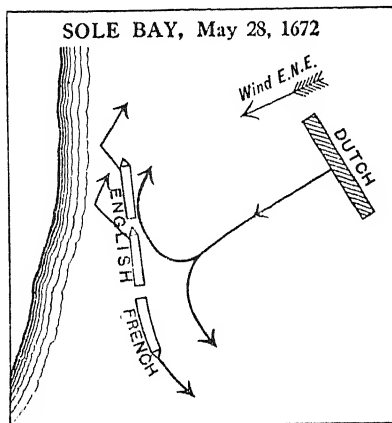
Meanwhile the French and English fleets united had set themselves to secure the mastery of the Narrow Seas. A contingent of six thousand English troops under Monmouth's command served with the French armies. Lediard and other early writers suppose that Churchill was among them. In fact he took part in a deadlier struggle afloat. The sea fighting began on March 13, before the declaration of war, with the surprise attack of Sir Robert Holmes's English squadron upon the Dutch Smyrna fleet while at anchor off the Isle of Wight. This treacherous venture miscarried, and the bulk of the Dutch vessels escaped. The companies of the Guards in which Churchill and his friend George Legge¹ were serving were embarked for the raid and took part in the action.²

The handling of the Dutch navy under De Ruyter in this campaign commands lasting admiration. He pressed into the jaws of the Channel to forestall the concentration of the French and English fleets. But the Duke of York, setting sail from the Thames in good time, made his junction with the French fleet from Brest, and De Ruyter was glad to extricate himself from the Channel and return safely to the North Sea. Here he lay off Walcheren and Texel, watching his chance to strike at superior forces and shielding his country meanwhile from an additional invasion. The Duke of York understood that if he could place the Anglo-French fleet about the Dogger Bank (we now know these waters as well as he) the Dutch fleet would be cut off from home as the Germans might have been after Jutland. But the English fleet, starved

¹ Afterwards Lord Dartmouth.

² Atkinson, *Marlborough and the Rise of the British Army*, p. 39, is the only writer who has noted this incident in Churchill's career. His account is exact; but his reference should be *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1671-72, p. 609.

by Parliament, was ill-found and short of men, and in any case it was necessary to replenish before sailing across the communications of the enemy. The combined fleets therefore proceeded through the Straits of Dover to Sole Bay (or Southwold), on the Suffolk coast, to fit themselves for their enterprise. Here from London several thousand seamen and soldiers, together with a crowd of gentlemen volunteers hurrying from the Court, joined them. For three days all the ships lay in the open roadstead busily embarking men, food, and munitions. But this was the opportunity which De Ruyter sought. Lord Sandwich, whose name revives from one generation to another in battleships christened *Montagu*, was a wary, hard-bitten salt. At the council of war



he complained of the posture and wished to put to sea. His warnings were ill received and attributed to excess of caution. Anyhow, everything was being done as fast as possible. But on the morning of May 28/June 7 a French frigate, hotly pursued, brought the news that the whole Dutch fleet was at her heels. Every one scrambled on board, and a hundred and one ships endeavoured to form their line of battle. The French division, under D'Estrées, whether from policy or necessity or because James's orders were lacking in precision, sailed upon a divergent course from the English fleet. De Ruyter, playing with the French and sending Van Ghent to attack the ships of Lord Sandwich, fell himself upon the Duke of York's division, of which at first not more than twenty were in their stations. In all he had ninety-one vessels and a superiority of at least two to one in the first part of the battle.

I cannot stay to name the names
Of all the ships that fought with James,
Their number and their tonnage ;

MARLBOROUGH

But this I say : the noble host
Right gallantly did take its post,
And covered all the hollow coast,
From Walderswyck to Dunwich.¹

Grievous and cruel was the long struggle which ensued. The Suffolk shores were crowded with frantic spectators, the cannonade was heard two hundred miles away. From noon till dusk the battle raged at close quarters. The Dutch desperately staked their superiority with cannon and fire-ships against the English, tethered upon a lee shore. The Duke of York's flagship, the *Prince*, was the central target of the attack. Upon her decks stood the 1st Company of the Guards—Captain Daniels, Lieutenant Picks, and Ensign Churchill. Smitten by the batteries of several Dutchmen, assailed by two successive fire-ship attacks, and swept by musketry, she was so wrecked in hull and rigging that by eleven o'clock she could no longer serve as a flagship. The Duke of York, who in the actual battle of Sole Bay displayed the courage expected of an English prince and admiral, was forced to shift his flag to the *St Michael*, and when this ship became unmanageable in turn he was rowed with his staff to the *London*. The Guards company had remained upon the *Prince*. The captain of the ship and more than two hundred men, a third of the complement, were killed or wounded. Both sides fought with the doggedness on which their races pride themselves. Lord Sandwich, brought to a standstill by a small Dutch vessel, wedged with extreme audacity under the bowsprit of the *Royal James*, became the prey of fire-ships. With his personal officers he paced his quarter-deck till the flames drove him overboard, where he perished. Both sides awaited the explosion of the magazines. The magazines of the *Royal James* did not explode. All her powder had been fired when she sank. Sunset and the possible return of the French ended a battle described by De Ruyter as the hardest of his thirty-two actions, and the Dutch withdrew, having destroyed for

¹ "A Song on the Duke's late Glorious Success over the Dutch," from *Naval Songs and Ballads* (ed. Firth, 1906), p. 82.



JAMES II
John Riley
National Portrait Gallery

many weeks the offensive power of the superior combined fleets.¹

Not one single word has come down to us of John's part in this deadly business, through which he passed unscathed. No reference to it exists in his correspondence or conversation. This was before the age when everybody kept diaries or wrote memoirs. It was just in the day's work. All we know is that his conduct gained him remarkable advancement. No fewer than four captains of the Admiralty Regiment had been killed, and he received double promotion from a Guards ensign to a Marine captaincy.²

Lieutenant Edward Picks complained to Sir Joseph Williamson, Arlington's Under-Secretary, that :

Mr Churchill, who was my ensign in the engagement, is made a Captain and I, without my Lord Arlington's kindness and yours, I fear may still continue a lieutenant, though I am confident my greatest enemies cannot say I misbehaved myself in the engagement. . . .

He further declared :

. . . if you will oblige me with your kindness to get me a company, I will present you with four hundred guineas when I receive my commission. Sir, I am confident it may be done by my Lord Arlington, for the King will not deny him anything.³

We do not know the details of the action. Favouritism there may have been in the double step, but it was favouritism founded upon exceptional conduct. In such rough times, when chiefs and subalterns faced the fire together, many wholesome correctives were at work. The Duke of York, coming himself out of heavy battle, would have acted in accordance with what he had seen and with what men said of Churchill's conduct.

Sole Bay for the time being knocked out the fleet, and only

¹ A full account of this battle with admirable contemporary picture-plans is given by Corbett (Navy Records Society, 1908). Mahan's comments are also instructive (*The Influence of Sea Power on History*, 1896, chapter iii).

² The commission, dated June 13, 1672, is at Blenheim. Cf. *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1671-72, pp. 218, 222, and C. Dalton, *Army Lists*, i, 127-128.

³ October 20, 1672, printed in full in F. W. Hamilton, *History of the Grenadier Guards*, i, 166.

meagre funds were found to refit and repair it. The infantry and gentlemen volunteers came ashore, and the Guards were ordered to France. The courtiers forgathered at Whitehall to celebrate their experiences in revel and carouse, and John, fresh from danger and in the flush of promotion, was welcomed, we doubt not, in the arms of Barbara. It is believed that at this time she paid the purchase money which enabled him to take up the captaincy his sword had gained. We apologize for mentioning such shocking facts to the reader; but it is our duty, for such was the depravity of these fierce and hectic times.

In 1673 Louis XIV again made war in person. Condé with weak forces occupied the Dutch in the north. Turenne similarly engaged the Imperialists in Alsace. The Great King advanced in the centre with the mass and magnificence of the French Army. His Majesty quitted Saint-Germains on May 1, accompanied by the Queen, Madame de Montespan, and the Court. It is understood that the presence of the Queen was indispensable to cover that of the mistress, and thus prevent scandal arising. The proprieties being observed, the assemblage arrived in due course at Tournai, where Madame de Montespan, who was with child, gave birth to a daughter. This happy event having been accomplished with full decorum, the hero-monarch took leave of his Court and his ladies, and, attended only by a personal retinue of several hundred persons, including a sufficiency of painters, poets, and historians, set himself to the stern business of war, entered his coach, and marched upon Courtrai. All the world wondered where he would strike. It soon appeared that he had honoured Maestricht, a strong Dutch fortress garrisoned by about five thousand men, as the scene of his intended triumph. He felt his military qualities more suited to sieges than to battles; and "Big sieges," he remarked, "please me more than the others."¹ Maestricht was accordingly invested on June 17.

It will be well for the reader to accustom himself at this

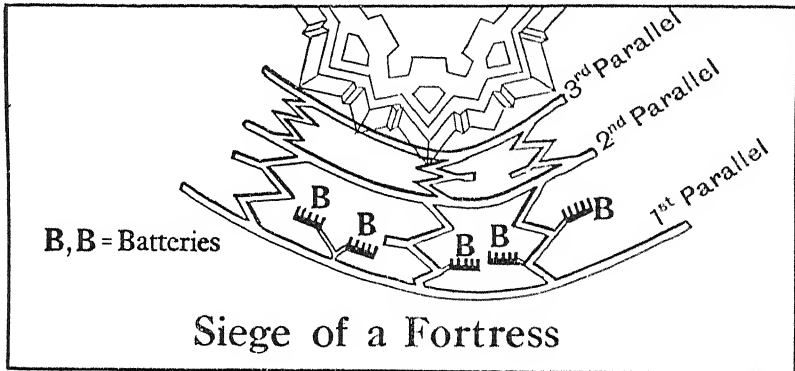
¹ Lavissee, *Histoire de France*, vii, 2, 317-318.

point to the routine and ritual of siege operations in this period; for unhappily these pages must speak of many. A network of fortresses, great and small, covered the frontiers of France and Holland. All were constructed upon the principles of Vauban or his Dutch competitor, Cohorn. We often gaze at these star-shaped plans without comprehending the marvellous intricacy of the defences they portray. Each salient angle (or ravelin), each pentagon (or bastion), was a self-contained compartment with its proper guns and garrison. Every line was so drawn as to be protected by flanking fire of cannon, or at least musketry, at right-angles. Around these ramparts, and conforming geometrically to their trace, ran the 'open ditch,' a stone-faced alley perhaps 20 feet deep and 40 feet wide, upon the farther side of which stretched the smooth glacis with its 'covered way,' often guarded by minor advanced defences, all commanded in reverse from the main line. The wall of the ditch nearest the rampart was called the scarp, and the opposite wall nearest the besiegers the counterscarp. The counterscarp was, where necessary, lined with galleries subterraneously connected with the fortress. From the stone-faced loopholes of these galleries annihilating fire, additional to all flanking fire, could be poured into the backs of any hostile troops who entered the ditch. Such, in short, was the defence.

The procedure of the attack was as follows. First the fortress was invested—*i.e.*, surrounded by a superior army and, so far as possible, cut off entirely from the world. Next on the side chosen for attack the trenches were opened. In general there were three parallels, the first being dug just beyond the range of the fortress cannon. From this first parallel zigzag approaches were dug to the second, and from this again, the zigzags getting ever more acute, to the third. The third parallel should have carried the assailants to the edge or within striking distances of the fortifications. Then by mining and close hand-to-hand fighting the counterscarp galleries of the sector under attack were seized and large portions of the counterscarp blown into the ditch. Meanwhile the besieging batteries planted in or behind the second

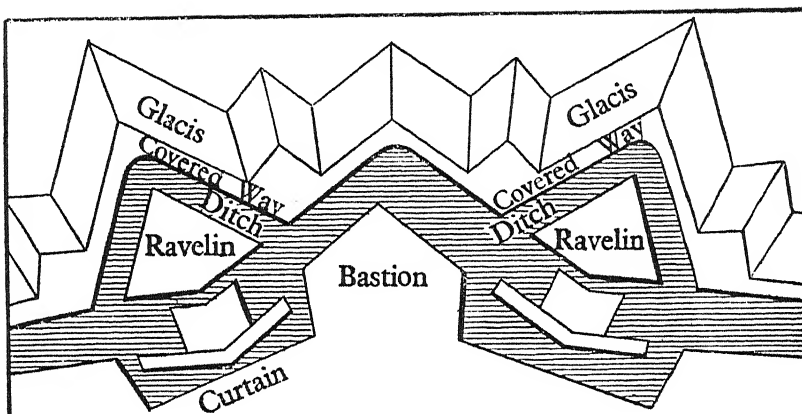
parallel, and protected against sorties by strong entrenchments and infantry garrisons, had been firing day after day, and sometimes week after week, upon the ramparts, silencing the defenders' cannon and breaching their parapets. Thus when the moment was ripe a rough but continuous road lay open from the first parallel into the fortress or into such ravelins or bastions of the fortress as had been battered.

The crisis of the assault was now imminent. Superior masses of troops, headed by their 'forlorn hopes' of volun-

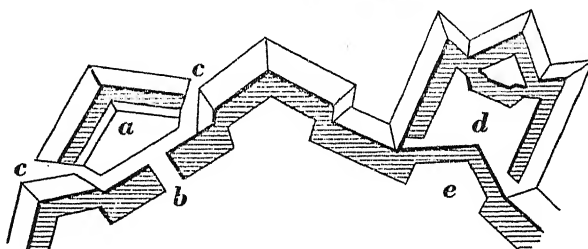


teers, were assembled in the third parallel and other slits dug close by and in the captured counterscarp galleries; and on the signal these charged across the *débris* which filled the covered way, climbed through the breach in the pulverized ramparts, and, storming whatever improvised breastworks or barricades the defenders had been able to construct, broke into the city.

However, the conflict rarely reached this culmination. A minute and rigorous etiquette governed both sides in a siege during the half-century of war with which we are concerned. The governor of a fortress was expected by his own Government as well as by his assailants to use it for what it was worth, and no more. If he stood an assault and repelled it, even though he afterwards was forced to surrender, his fame was great. If he resisted until the breaches were practicable, he might make a bargain to save needless loss of life which entitled the garrisons to march out with all the honours of war—"bag and baggage, drums beating, matches lighted, bullet in the

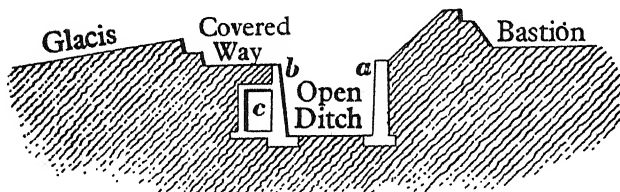


Details of Part of a Fortress



a = Demilune Covering. *d* = Hornwork Covering.
b = Gate and *e* = A Bastion.
c, c = Two Sally Ports.

Further details to illustrate terms



a = Scarp *b* = Counterscarp
c = Counterscarp Gallery

Section through a Bastion

mouth, etc." The city then passed peacefully into the hands of the besiegers, who usually treated the inhabitants with all proper consideration. But if the governor, presuming too much on fortune, forced the besiegers to a needless assault which in fact he well knew he could not resist, and if the place was taken by storm, then the whole city was given up to sack, rape, and flame. Very nice questions therefore arose for all governors and for the civil inhabitants once the assault was imminent, and their conduct in these circumstances was judged by highly standardized expert opinion on both sides and in all the armies of Europe.

We have, of course, explained only the conventional features of a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century siege. Each case among the many hundreds that occurred presented peculiarities of its own. Sometimes in the greatest operations a relieving army strong enough to break the investment, if not to beat the besiegers, approached the scene. This had to be warded off in one of two ways. Either a covering army manœuvred continually between the fortress and its would-be rescuers, or else the besiegers constructed what are called 'lines of circumvallation'—*i.e.*, they built an improvised fortress around themselves, enclosing the doomed city in its midst, and were besieged from without, while pressing their attack within. We shall presently see the Duke of Marlborough besieging cities whose garrisons were almost as strong as his own army, while his covering forces confronted a relieving army capable at any moment of fighting an equal battle in the field.

Nothing of this kind, however, presented itself at the siege of Maestricht. It was less like a serious war struggle than a sanguinary tournament in which the common soldiers were slaughtered as well as the knights and nobles. The strength of the French army was unchallengeable, and no relieving forces durst appear. Vauban prescribed the stages and method of the attack, and the Great King took the credit. "Vauban," he explained modestly, "proposed me the steps which I thought the best." Above all, the master enjoined

prudence. Nothing was to be hurried, no stage was to be slurred. The operation was to be a model. "Let us go surely, taking even unnecessary precautions." We are assured that he set a personal example in the endurance of hardships—no doubt for an hour or two by day or night ; and that he exposed his sacred person from time to time to the fire of the enemy. And all was duly immortalized in the French poetry, tapestries, pictures, and engravings of the age.

We do not know precisely what happened to Captain Churchill between the battle of Sole Bay and the siege of Maestricht. The Admiralty regiment in which he now held a company went to France in December. Various English contingents were serving in Alsace or in garrison with the French. It seems probable that once it became clear that the centre of the war was to be in Flanders and that the Great King would be there himself, Monmouth allowed or encouraged a handful of swells and their personal attendants to leave the different units of the army and come to the bull's-eye of the fighting under his personal direction. At any rate, England was represented at Maestricht only by the Duke of Monmouth with a score of gentlemen volunteers, prominent among whom was Churchill, and an escort of thirty gentlemen troopers of the Life Guards. Louis XIV treated the distinguished delegation with the ceremony due to the bastard son of his royal brother. Monmouth was assigned his turn as 'General of the Trenches,' and ample opportunity was offered to him and his friends of winning distinction before the most critical and fashionable military assemblage of the period. Every one of them was on his mettle, eager to hazard his life in the arena and wrest renown from beneath so many jealous and competent eyes. Little did this gay company trouble themselves about the rights and wrongs of the war, or the majestic balance of power in Europe ; and we cannot doubt that our young officer shared their reckless mood to the full. Comradeship and adventure and the hopes of glory and promotion seemed all-sufficing to the eyes and sword of youth.

The trenches were opened ten days after the investment,

and a week later the siege works justified an attempt to break in upon the fortress. The attack, timed for ten o'clock at night, was arranged to fall in Monmouth's tour of duty. Picked detachments from the best regiments, including the King's Musketeers, formed the storming forces. The King came and stood at the end of the trenches to watch. The signal was given, and Monmouth, with Churchill and his Englishmen at his side, led the French assault. With heavy losses from close and deadly fire, amid the explosion of two mines and of six thousand grenades, the counterscarp galleries were occupied, and a half-moon work in front of the Brussels gate was attacked. Three times the assailants were driven partly out of their lodgments and three times they renewed the assault, until finally Churchill is said to have planted the French standard on the parapet of the half-moon. The rest of the night was spent in consolidating the defence and digging new communications, and at daylight Monmouth handed over the captured works to supporting troops. The Englishmen were resting in their tents, and Monmouth was about to dine, when near noon of the next day the dull roar of a mine and heavy firing proclaimed the Dutch counter-stroke. The governor, M. de Fariaux, a Frenchman in the service of the States-General, gallantly leading his men, had sallied out upon the captured works.

The episode which followed belongs to romance rather than to history or war, but the most detailed and authentic records exist about it. We have two first-hand accounts in letters written to Arlington; one is from Duras, a French Huguenot noble of high rank who as early as 1665—flying from the wrath to come—had naturalized himself an English subject. Duras, like Churchill, was personally attached to the Duke of York, and seems to have enjoyed his unbounded confidence and favour. He subsequently became the Earl of Feversham, whom we shall meet again presently at Sedgemoor. A further account (from which we shall quote) is from Lord Alington, who was himself in the thick of the fighting.

Monmouth sent appeals to a company of musketeers at hand. Their officer, a certain M. d'Artagnan, then famous

in the Army and since deathless in Dumas's fiction, responded instantly. There was no time to go through the zigzags of the communication trenches. De Fariaux was already in the half-moon. Monmouth, fleet of foot, led straight for the struggle across the top of the ground. With him came Churchill, twelve Life Guardsmen, and a handful of Englishmen of quality, with some valiant pages and servants. They reached the half-moon from an unexpected direction at the moment when the fighting was at its height. D'Artagnan and his musketeers joined them. The Life Guards threw away their carbines (twelve were subsequently reissued from the English ordnance stores) and drew their swords. Monmouth, Churchill, and d'Artagnan forced their way in. Here Lord Alington's letter to Lord Arlington¹ will best carry on the account.

After the Duke had put on his arms, we went not out at the ordinary place, but leapt over the banke of the Trenches, in the face of our Enemy. Those that hapned to be with the Duke were Mr Charles Obrien, Mr Villars,² Lord Rockingham's two sons, and Capt. Watson their kinsman, Sir Tho. Armstrong, Capt. Churchille, Capt. Godfrey, Mr Roe and myselfe, with the Duke's two Pages and three or four more of his servants, thus we marcht with our swords in our hands to a baricade of the Enemys, where only one man could passe att a time. There was Monsieur Artaignan with his musketeers who did very bravely. This Gentleman was one of the greatest reputation in the Army, he would have perswaded the Duke not to have past that place, but that beeing not to be done, this Gentleman would goe along with him, but in passing that narrow place was kill'd with a shot through his head, upon wch the Duke and we past where Mr O'Brien had a shot through his leages. The souldiers att this tooke heart the Duke twice leading them on with Great Courage; when his Grace found the enemy being to retire, he was prevail'd with to retire to the Trenche, the better to give his Comands as there should be occasion. Then he sent Mr Villars to the King for 500 fresh

¹ S.P., 78/137, f. 142. Confusion between Alington and Arlington has led to error in many books.

² Or Villiers, son of Lord Grandison. Several writers confuse him at this point with Louis Hector de Villars, afterwards the famous French Marshal, who fought in a different part of the same attack.

men and to give him an account of what had past. When those men came, our Enemys left us without any farther disturbance, masters of what we had gained the night before. so that to the Dukes' great Honor we not only tooke more than was expected, but maintain'd it after we had been in possession of it, but with the losse of a great many men and many brave officers. One of their Great Fournoes blewe into the aire near 50 men, just before they made their sally. And I truly believe we had killed and wounded from the time we went into the Trenches to our coming out, about 1500. Some old Commanders say, this was the bravest and brisket action they had seen in their lives, and our Duke did the part of a much older and more experienced General, and the King was very kinde to him last night.

Churchill, who was wounded at Monmouth's side, was also held to have distinguished himself. He was, in fact, publicly thanked upon a great parade by Louis XIV, who assured him that his good conduct would be reported to his own sovereign. Another subaltern fought in this attack whose name will recur in these pages: Louis Hector de Villars against orders joined the assault. His gallantry won forgiveness for his disobedience. We do not know whether he and Churchill became acquainted at Maestricht. They certainly met at Malplaquet.

The governor of Maestricht, satisfied with the resistance he had made and strongly pressed by the townsfolk to capitulate while time remained, beat a parley, and was allowed to march out with the honours of war. The severity of the losses, especially among persons of note in the storming troops, made a strong impression throughout the camps and the Courts concerned. Monmouth was praised and petted by Louis not only from policy, but on the undoubted merit of his performance. He and his English team received the unstinted tributes of "the finest army in the world." The brief and spectacular campaign was soon brought to a close. Louis XIV rejoined his anxious Court, who burned before him the incense of flattery with all the delicate address of which the French are peculiarly capable. The armies retired into winter quarters, and Monmouth and his hunting party were welcomed again into the bosom of Whitehall.

Churchill's favour stood high at this time. Monmouth commended him to Charles with the words, "Here is the brave man who saved my life." To this there was to be a grim sequel. The King, who was by this time in full flight with the charming Louise de K roualle, and was perhaps not so sorry as he ought to have been to have Barbara taken off his hands and made thoroughly happy, was gracious to a degree. England seemed to have shared the honours of the siege of Maestricht without any of the trouble, expense, and loss of sending an army.

Meanwhile Captain Churchill and the Duchess of Cleveland continued to make the running at the Court. That a virile young officer should be the lover of a beautiful, voluptuous, and immoral woman is not inexplicable to human nature. The fact that she was a few years his senior is by no means a bar. On the contrary, the charms of thirty are rarely more effective than when exerted on the impressionable personality of twenty-three. No one is invited to applaud such relationships, but few, especially in time of war, will hold them unpardonable, and only malignancy would seek to score them for ever upon a young man's record. How disgusting to pretend, with Lord Macaulay, a filthy, sordid motive for actions prompted by those overpowering compulsions which leap flaming from the crucible of life itself! Inconstant Barbara loved her youthful soldier tenderly and followed with eager, anxious eyes his many adventures and perils from steel and fire. He returned her love with the passion of youth. She was rich and could have money for the asking. He had no property but his sword and sash. But they were equals, they were kin, they lived in the same world. She was now the mother of his child.

Contemporaries vie with one another in describing her charms. She was by all accounts a picture of transcendent loveliness. Already the hopes of the future gleamed upon John's shapely frame and noble countenance. Why need we seek farther for the impulses that drew and held these two together? Why make of their romance a shameful scarecrow of mercenary vice? Naturally she wished to help him in the way

that would help him most ; naturally she gave him money, and was proud to have it to give. The wars lay on the coasts, and from time to time the sound of hostile guns thudded in the English air. Death stood very near a captain of the Guards, and love drew majesty and sanction from that sombre presence. He, serving ashore and afloat under the shot of the enemy, must have felt no shame and earned no scorn in taking from her hands the modest necessary sums without which he could not have pursued his career or taken his promotions as he gained them. But it would, of course, have been much better if John had been wealthy and chaste, and if Barbara had remained the faithful spouse of Roger Palmer. The association brought him the frowns—if increasingly perfunctory—rather than the favour of the Royal Power. The only reward which the King bestowed upon the presumptuous rival in his waning affections was to set him in the forefront of the battle. But this was a reward of which the recipient was prepared to take the fullest advantage.

He was back at the front in the early autumn. The Admiralty Regiment was now with Turenne in Westphalia. There is little doubt that Churchill served as a captain with them during the rest of 1673. Although no great operations were in progress, he made his way in the Army. There is always the story of Turenne wagering, when some defile had been ill defended, that the “handsome Englishman” would retake it with half the number of troops used when it was lost ; and how this was accordingly and punctually done. No one has been able to assign the date or the place, but at any rate the newly made captain in the Admiralty Regiment was a figure well known in Turenne’s army and high in the favour of the Marshal himself before the year closed.

CHAPTER VI
THE DANBY ADMINISTRATION

(1673-1674)

FOR some time King Charles proceeded on the lines of the Secret Treaty of Dover. He had issued his Declaration of Indulgence, which in the name of toleration gave to Catholics the freedom they were denying to Protestants in every country where they were in the ascendant. But the French subsidies, though quite convenient for paying a peace-time navy, were utterly inadequate to maintain a costly war. The expenses of the two great sea battles, Sole Bay and the Texel, and the repair of the fleet were enormous. Even the contingent of six thousand men in France was a heavy charge. The King was forced to repudiate the interest upon his loans from the goldsmiths and the bankers in the celebrated "Stop of the Exchequer." Parliament had been prorogued for fifteen months: it must now be called together.

Accordingly in February 1673 the once enthusiastic Cavalier Parliament reassembled in a mood of pent-up passion. We have invaluable reports of their debates in the records kept by Mr Grey, the Member for Derby. The Commons demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Declaration of Indulgence as a precedent condition of all supply. They did not at this stage attack the Dutch war. Indeed, Shaftesbury's Ministerial fulmination against Holland, *Delenda est Carthago*, received silent approval. They do not seem to have been moved by the heroic spectacle of Protestant resistance to Louis. The war at sea against so dangerous a naval rival as Holland aroused their partisanship. It was the pro-Catholic inclination of the Crown which excited their wrath. Louis XIV, on the other hand, was more interested in victory over the Dutch than in the fortunes of the English Catholics. His Ambassador was

instructed to advise Charles to give way upon the Declaration of Indulgence, and even to accept a Test Act which excluded Papists from all offices of State. Charles agreed, and the Commons voted a liberal supply of £1,200,000.

Stern, curious eyes were now turned upon the Duke of York. Rumours of his conversion to Rome had long been rife. How would he stand the Test? The answer was soon forthcoming. The heir to the throne renounced all his offices, and Prince Rupert succeeded him in the command of the fleet. So it was true, then, that James was a resolute Papist, ready to sacrifice all material advantages to the faith his countrymen abhorred. And now there came a trickle of allegations and disclosures about the Secret Treaty of Dover. Rumours of decisions taken by the King, by his brother, and his Ministers to convert England to Rome were rife during all the summer and autumn of 1673.

Moreover, the war went ill. Like so many wars, it looked easy and sure at the outset. There is always the other side, who have their own point of view and think, often with surprising reason, that they also have a chance of victory. The cutting of the dykes had marred the opening French campaign. The Dutch defensive at sea in 1672 and 1673 was magnificent. Rupert's battles against De Ruyter were bloody and drawn. The situation of Holland had vastly improved. The Prince of Orange, Stadtholder and Captain-General, stood at the head of truly 'United Provinces,' and in August both the Empire and Spain entered into alliance with the Dutch to maintain the European balance. Diplomatically and militarily the Anglo-French compact had failed. On top of all this came the news that Charles had allowed a most obnoxious marriage between the Duke of York and the Catholic princess Mary of Modena.

A standing army of ten thousand men, commanded by a Frenchman, assembled first at Blackheath and then at Yarmouth, was believed by many to be designed for a forcible conversion of England to Popery. Our affairs had already reached a sufficient refinement for the passage of subsidies across the Channel to be reflected in Anglo-French exchange. When

THE DANBY ADMINISTRATION

Parliament met in October all sections were united in the demand for peace with Holland and the end of the alliance with France. Vehement opponents demanded the overthrow of the Ministry. But by this date the Cabal was already splintering into its original elements. It had held together upon the principle of toleration for Catholics and Dissenters. Now Parliament deliberately rejected, and, indeed, reversed, this policy. Clifford, himself almost certainly a Catholic, finally wrecked the Cabal by his refusal to take the Test, and he retired to his estates to die so swiftly that men spoke of suicide or a broken heart. Arlington became Lord Chamberlain and passed out of power into Court life and the pursuit of wealth and security. Ashley, soon to succeed to the earldom of Shaftesbury, and Buckingham made terms with the Whig Opposition, from whom, as Puritans, they had originally come. Henceforward they led the assault upon the King, for whose misguided policy they had been partly responsible. Lauderdale, the first to be assailed, alone survived to continue his skilful maltreatment of Scotland.

A new scene, and, indeed, a new era, now opened. The man upon whom the King began increasingly to rely was Sir Thomas Osborne, who had been made a baron and had succeeded Clifford as Lord Treasurer in June 1673. A year later he was created Earl of Danby, the one of his five titles best known to history. Sprung from a Yorkshire family faithfully Cavalier, Danby had a large, though highly critical, following in the House of Commons. More than most statesmen of this period he had a sense of England as a personality. He was in many ways a typical 'John Bull.' Equally averse from Catholics and Dissenters, he sought to rally the nation to the throne upon the old Royalist cry of "Church and King." He set himself to manage the House of Commons, not only by a policy generally agreeable to them, but by pretty bold corruption of individual members such as was afterwards perfected by Sir Robert Walpole. Although the King differed from Danby both on the French alliance and the Catholic succession, he leaned upon him, and already felt the need of an organized following, besides the

Court party, behind Ministers in the House of Commons. Danby did his work with robust vigour. The King swung steadily and smoothly with the change of the tide like a ship at anchor, and his prow and guns were soon pointing in exactly the opposite direction.

Through Spanish mediation peace was signed with Holland on February 19, 1674. The Dutch, stubborn though they were, gave in their sore straits the fullest satisfaction to English naval pride. Within six years of the Medway, within two years of Sole Bay, and within a year of De Ruyter's proud encounters with Rupert, Holland accepted with every circumstance of humility the naval supremacy of England. The States-General confirmed the agreement of the Treaty of Breda (1667) that all Dutch ships should dip their flag and topsails whenever, north of Cape Finisterre, they sighted an English man-of-war. Not only were Dutch fleets and squadrons to make their salute to similar forces of the Royal Navy, but even the whole of the Dutch fleet was to make its submission to a single English vessel, however small, which flew the royal flag. The history books which dwell upon our shame in the Medway and the Thames do not do justice to this turning of the tables. Callous, unmoral, unscrupulous as had been Charles's policy, he might now on this account at least exclaim, "He laughs best who laughs last."

Peace had relieved the finances from an insupportable strain. The continuance of the war on the Continent gave the English many profits as traders and as carriers for both sides. The Dutch indemnity came to hand. In two years Danby rescued the country from bankruptcy. Profiting by a period of expanding trade and an increased yield from customs and excise, and freed from the gigantic war-charges, he was able to make the King comfortable. He wielded the axe of economy in all directions, laying up the fleet and disbanding the greater part of the Army. The Danby Administration—for such, indeed, it was in modern Parliamentary parlance—although the first of its kind, gave effect to the will of the people more fully than is usually done now as the result of popular elections.

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The King was conscious of a great relief. He had become, in fact, for the moment a constitutional sovereign with a popular Minister to bear the brunt. But as soon as the national tension diminished, politics became more complex. Neither King nor Minister had really trusted each other, or pursued a single policy. Charles had not unnaturally some feelings of compunction, as between one gentleman and another, about Louis, whom he had unquestionably cheated. He did not wish to risk open personal rupture with so dangerous a potentate. The late hostilities against the Dutch had been described as "war without anger." Could not the desertion of France be accomplished at least without impoliteness? Charles was therefore anxious to keep in touch with the French King, and especially to receive his money; and from time to time there were minor secret agreements, largely arising out of the failure to implement the original Treaty of Dover. Something had, for instance, to be patched up about the British troops serving in the pay of France and other matters of that kind, so as not to make the reversal of policy an utterly impudent breach of contract.

This policy quickly developed into an interlude of political blackmail used simultaneously against Parliament on the one hand and Louis on the other. Danby, in full accord with the Prince of Orange, moved towards a breach with France. But Louis, in spite of previous disappointments, thought it worth while to purchase English neutrality. This was just the kind of game which King Charles could play extremely well, and apart from its squalid aspect no great harm was done to English interests. The King got money from the House of Commons by saying, "If you are hostile to France, we must get our fleet and army into order: give me money." To Louis he said, "Unless you keep me in a position of complete independence of the House of Commons, they will make me join the Dutch: give me money." Very considerable sums were paid from both quarters, while all the time nothing was done to satisfy either. Like Danton a century later, Charles was "paid for, but not bought."

The King got on well with his Minister—too well, in fact, for the fortunes of the latter. We had unconsciously arrived at a kind of dyarchy in which the distinctive forces of Crown and Parliament held each other in play with many a compromise and reservation, and, in spite of much friction, arrived often at some agreed step. The Ministers generally considered they must obey the King and take responsibility for his actions up to the point, at any rate, where their own heads came into danger. Danby had no direct correspondence with the French, and though he feathered his own nest in accordance with custom and saw that his numerous relations did not lack jobs, he took no money himself from Louis. Nevertheless, he shouldered the burden of the French intrigue as a necessary part of what was in its initiation his successful policy. He acquiesced in the King's habit of taking French money. He even signed "by the King's command" the receipts for important sums. Montagu, the English Ambassador in Paris, urged the plan. "Now is the time to ask the French; they can refuse you nothing," he counselled. When there was much suspicion and talk Danby adopted a brazen attitude. He said in effect to important intimates, "Let us spoil the Amalekites; let us make the French pay through the nose. They are getting nothing in return." Charles for his part was well content that this double auction should go on indefinitely. He kept on urging Louis to moderate his ambitions, and to make peace with the Dutch. He expatiated on the difficulties of his position, and warned his royal brother that, unless large payments arrived punctually, he would be forced into war against him. He took all the money he could get from Parliament to increase his armaments, ostensibly for hostilities against France. So ran affairs during 1676 and 1677.

There were in 1674 five or six thousand English troops in French pay; but these had to be reduced after the Anglo-Dutch treaty, and as many of the men returned home and no drafts were sent out, the strength of the various regiments soon fell, and it became necessary to amalgamate units. Thus Skelton's regiment became merged with Peterborough's.

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Peterborough resigned. Who was to take his place? Who should command the combined regiment but the brilliant officer who had planted the lilies of France on the parapet of the Maestricht half-moon, whose quality was known throughout the French Army, who had been thanked by Louis in the field, and whose advancement was so entirely agreeable to Charles II, to the Duke of York, and to both their lady-loves? A news-letter from Paris on March 19, 1674, says :

Lord Peterborough's regiment, now in France, is to be broken up and some companies of it joined to the companies that went out of the Guards last summer, and be incorporated into one regiment, and to remain there for the present under the command of Captain Churchill, son of Sir Winston.¹

But before Churchill could receive the colonelcy he had to be presented at Versailles and receive the personal approval of the Great King. He therefore proceeded to Paris furnished with a letter from Monmouth to Louvois, the French Minister of War, which explained the proposed amalgamation of regiments. On March 21 Louvois wrote to thank Monmouth for his letter, to announce that Churchill had been accepted as a colonel in the French service by Louis XIV, and to suggest that companies not merely from Skelton's, but also from Sackville's and Hewetson's regiments, should be included in his command.² On April 3 the commission was granted, and John Churchill found himself Colonel in the service of France and at the head of a regiment of English infantry.³ He was just twenty-four. He had skipped the rank of lieutenant after Sole Bay; he now, in the French service, skips the ranks of Major and Lieutenant-Colonel at a bound. He retained his substantive rank of Captain in the English Army until January 1675,

¹ Le Fleming Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 108.

² Louvois to Monmouth, March 31 (N.S.), 1674; *Dépôt de la guerre*, 391, pièce 204. Cf. Lockhart to Arlington of the same date (S.P., 78/139, f. 73).

³ The original commission, dated April 3/13, is at Blenheim. Lord Wolseley has made two errors in connexion with this commission. In the first place he has dated it March 3/13, and in the second place he has linked it with a correspondence of Louvois throwing doubts on Churchill's suitability for the post, which belongs to nearly three years later.

when he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in the Duke of York's regiment. He had evidently at this time impressed his personality on the French Court. He had been there a year before with half a dozen English officers on the way to the Maestricht campaign. Once again the Great King acknowledged the bows of the young Adonis in scarlet and gold, of whose exploits under the planets of Mars and Venus he had already been well informed through the regular channels. He would certainly not have allowed the royal radiance to play upon this elegant, graceful figure if there were not veils which shroud the future.

No historian has examined the scanty records of Churchill's movements from 1674 to 1677 with the care and accuracy of Atkinson. It is surprising that he should cast doubts upon Churchill's presence at the battle of Sinzheim. The foundations of this are solid. Mr Hare, some day the Duke of Marlborough's chaplain, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, accompanied him on several of his campaigns. His well-known journal was read by Marlborough himself, and is one of our comparatively few indisputable documents. Hare, writing about the campaign of 1704, states that on June 15 the Duke advanced to Sinzheim, "which he could not but remember since the year 1674, when he there commanded an English regiment under that great general Marshal Turenne, in the memorable battle fought between him and the Imperial generals, the Duke of Loraine and Count Caprara."¹

This passage is familiar. It is confirmed by a manuscript account of the battle of Sinzheim which a search of the French military archives has revealed.² By this document Churchill is shown serving apart from his own regiment as a volunteer, as at Maestricht, with Douglas's regiment of foot in the French reconnaissance before the battle.

As it was known that there was no news of the enemy army about Heidelberg, and thinking that it was stationed far off to the right in the direction of the Margravate of Baden, Douglas was immediately ordered to advance with 1500 musketeers and 6 guns. On the third day after his departure from Hagenau he

¹ Coxe, i, 8 n.

² *Dépôt de la guerre*, 413, pièce 138.

arrived near Wisloch, three hours from Heidelberg in the direction of Heilbron; he had taken with him M. de Montgaillard and Mr Hamilton, Mr Churchill and M. Duvivier, Quartermaster of the Languedoc regiment, these latter as volunteers.

This detachment rejoined Turenne on June 15, and on the 16th the whole army marched on Sinzheim, on the left bank of the Elsenz. The battle began with Turenne's seizure of the town and the forcing of the stream. The fighting lasted for seven hours and ended in the retreat of the enemy with heavy loss. Although unaccompanied by strategic results, it is claimed as a perfect example in miniature of Turenne's handling of all three arms. Turenne after various manœuvres received reinforcements, and proceeded to ravage the Palatinate, partly to fill his own magazines and partly to impede its reoccupation by a still unbeaten enemy.¹ This military execution of the province dictated by the needs of war must be distinguished from the systematic devastation of the same region ordered by Louis XIV seven years later as a measure of policy.

We have a letter from an old lady—the widow Saint-Just—one of the few residents who did not suffer from Turenne's severities in 1674, written to the Duke of Marlborough from Metz on July 16, 1711, in which she says :

It would be indeed difficult for me to forget you, Monseigneur, and I have an indispensable duty to remember all my life the kindness which you showed me in Metz *thirty-four years ago*.² You were very young then, Monseigneur, but you gave already by your excellent qualities the hope of that valour, politeness and conduct which have raised you with justice to the rank where you command all men. And what is more glorious, Monseigneur, is that the whole world, friends and enemies, bear witness to the truth of what I have the honour to write; and I have no doubt that it was your generosity on my account which [then] made itself felt, because the troops who came and burnt everything around my land at Mezeray in the plain spared my estate, saying that they were so ordered by high authority.³

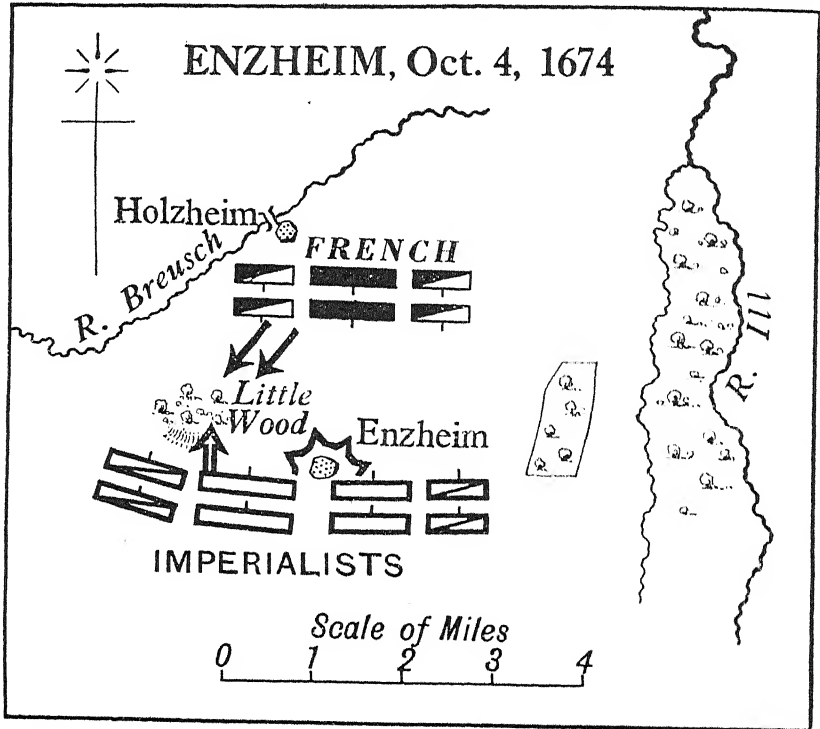
¹ Cf. J. Revol, *Turenne*, pp. 316 *seq.*

² Author's italics.

³ Coxe, i, 8 n.

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Whether this letter stirred some scented memory, long cherished in Churchill's retentive mind, which after the lapse of thirty-four years would make the shielding of this little plot and homestead from the ravages of war an incident he would not forget, we cannot tell. We think, however, that the widow is wrong in her dates. It is, of course, possible



—though the evidence is against it—that Churchill was in Metz on some military duty in 1677. But it is far more likely that the letter refers to the year 1674, when indeed the troops “came and burnt everything around . . . Mezeray.”

There is no dispute, however, about Churchill's presence at the head of his regiment in the battle of Enzheim in October. Here all is certain and grim. We have one of his matter-of-fact letters written to Monmouth about the action. We have also a much fuller account by the future Lord Feversham. Turenne had ten thousand horse and

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twelve thousand foot against enemy forces almost double. Nevertheless, he crossed the Breusch river and attacked the Imperialists by surprise. All turned upon what was called the 'Little Wood,' which lay on the French right between the armies. The development of the main action depended on who held the wood, and the fight for it constituted the crux of the battle. A competent French colonel, Boufflers by name, whom we shall meet several times in higher situations later, was sent to clear the wood with his dragoons. He could make no headway, and resigned his effort to the infantry. Both sides began to cram battalions into the wood. The French rarely stint their own, and never their allies' blood; and the brunt of Turenne's battle was borne by the hired troops. Dongan's battalion of Hamilton's Irish regiment, the third battalion of Warwick's Loyal English, and Churchill's battalion were successively thrown into the struggle. Duras (Feversham) wrote, "One and all assuredly accomplished marvels." They certainly suffered most severe losses. Churchill's battalion, which was the last to engage, had half its officers killed or wounded in the Little Wood. The rest of the island mercenaries suffered almost as heavily in this and other parts of the field. The three squadrons of Monmouth's horse charged the Imperialists who were attacking the French left and centre at a critical moment, and won much honour with almost total destruction. Turenne bivouacked on the field, claiming a victory at heavy odds, and his strategic theme was vindicated. But the battle must take its place in that large category 'bloody and indecisive.'

Feversham, reporting to the Government, wrote, "No one in the world could possibly have done better than Mr Churchill has done and M. de Turenne is very well pleased with all our nation." Turenne also mentioned Churchill and his battalion in his despatches. It was a very rough, savage fight in a cause not reconcilable with any English interest. We print in full Churchill's report to Monmouth because it shows an aspect of his character. Nothing is spent in trap-pings and explanations. It gives a bald, dour recital of such service facts as it was necessary that Monmouth should know.

Its restraint does not conceal the resentment of a Colonel whose soldiers have been ill-used and slaughtered in a foreign quarrel.¹

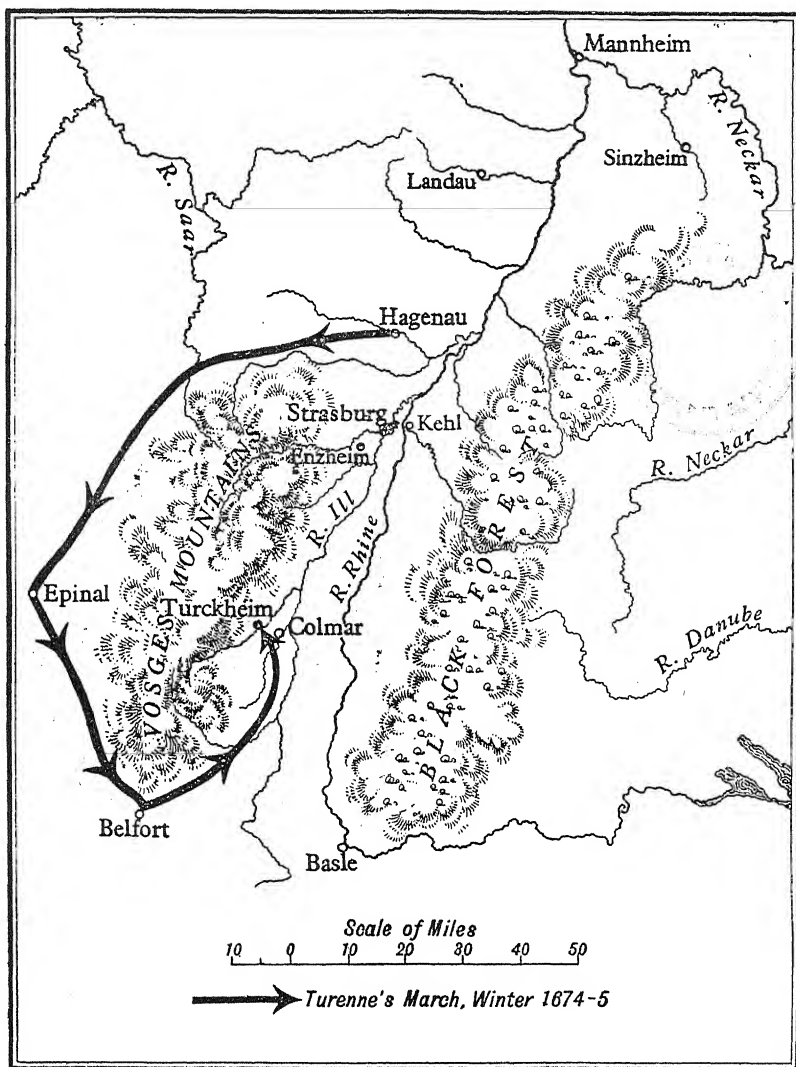
Sept. 25/Oct. 5, 1674

COL. JOHN CHURCHILL TO THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH

The 4th of this month M. de Turenne proffered battle to the enemies' army, but they would not advance out of their post to fight us, though they were much stronger, so we were forced to attack them as well as we could. The enemy had a village in their rear and a wood in their front, so M. de Turenne made 8 battalions of us and the dragoons to march out into the wood and push till we came to the head of it, where they had a battery of 5 cannon, which we beat them from and took the cannon and afterwards pushed their foot about 100 yards from the wood's side, so that there was room for squadrons of horse to draw up with us, which being done, we advanced towards them, and beat them out of that post, which was a very good ditch; which being done M. de Vaubrun, one of our lieutenant-generals, commanded us to guard that, and advance no forwarder so that we advanced all that day afterward no forwarder. Half of our foot was so posted that they did not fight at all. Your Grace's last battalion was on this attack, and both those of Hamilton and mine, so we have lost a great many officers, Hamilton, his brother and several others of his regiment. In your battalion Captains Cassels and Lee were killed and 2 wounded. I had Captain Dillon killed, Captains Piggott and Tute wounded, Lieutenants Butler and Mordant and Ensign Donmere wounded, and Lieutenants Watts, Howard, Tucker and Field killed. I had with me but 22 officers, of which I have given your Grace account of 11. Yet your regiment of horse was used much worse than we, for Lieut-colonel Littleton, Captain Gremes and Sheldon and 4 cornets with several lieutenants were killed. The Major, Captain Kirke and most of the officers not killed are wounded, and above half the regiment lost with also several of their colours.

I durst not brag much of our victory, but it is certain they left the field as soon as we. We have three of their cannon and several of their colours and some prisoners. The village where the battle was fought is called Waldheim.

¹ *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1674-75, p. 367. Cf. Atkinson, pp. 55 *seq.*



TURENNE'S MARCH

Even before the battle it seems likely that Churchill was well esteemed in the army. We find him selected by Turenne with five hundred picked men for an attack upon the Imperialist rearguard at a moment when it was recrossing the Rhine. But only here and there does his figure catch a fleeting gleam. Lots of others, for whom no one has rummaged, did as well. All that can be said is that he did his duty and bore a solid reputation in this hard-pressed, over-weighted, and yet victorious army. There is no doubt that he fought too in the mid-winter attack on Turckheim. In those days the armies reposed from October till April, the condition of such roads as there were alone imposing immobility upon them; but Turenne, starting from Haguenau on November 19, broke into the Imperialist cantonments, and after cutting up various detachments gained a considerable success on Christmas Day. Churchill's regiment marched with him. Duras and other English officers had already been given leave to Paris, it being essential to Turenne's design to pretend that the year's campaign was over. Although a letter on December 15 states that Churchill was daily expected in Paris, he was certainly with the troops.¹

It is customary to say that he learned the art of war from Turenne, and attempts have been made to draw comparisons between the attacks across the Breusch at Enzheim and across the Nebel at Blenheim. This is going too far. No competent officer of that age could watch the composed genius of Turenne in action without being enriched thereby. But no battle ever repeats itself. The success of a commander does not arise from following rules or models. It consists in an absolutely new comprehension of the dominant facts of the situation at the time, and all the forces at work. Cooks use recipes for dishes and doctors have prescriptions for diseases, but every great operation of war is unique. The kind of intelligence capable of grasping in its complete integrity what is actually happening in the field is not taught by the tactics of commanders on one side or the other—though these may train the mind—but by a profound

¹ S.P., 78/139, *cf.* ff. 145, 172.

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appreciation of the actual event. There is no surer road to ill-success in war than to imitate the plans of bygone heroes and to fit them to novel situations. The Enzheim letter is by no means a tribute of admiration to Turenne. On the contrary, the laconic remark, "Half of our foot was so posted that they did not fight at all," is a damaging criticism of an action fought necessarily against superior forces. It comes with peculiar weight from Churchill, who knew so well how to keep unhelpful opinions to himself and hardly ever committed them to paper. We do not know what part, other than has been described, Churchill played in these campaigns. But he must have been thinking intensely about war ever since he came of age, and he certainly had many opportunities of watching it at close quarters under one of its most famous masters, and of learning in a responsible but subordinate position every detail of active service.

CHAPTER VII

SARAH

(1675-1676)

IN the early seventies a new star began to shine in the constellations of the English Court. Frances Jennings—"la belle Jenyns" of Grammont—beautiful as "Aurora or the promise of Spring," haughty, correct, mistress of herself, became a waiting-woman of the Duchess of York. She soon had no lack of suitors. The Duke himself cast favourable glances towards her, which were suavely but firmly deflected. Fair and impregnable, she shone upon that merry, easy-going, pleasure-loving society.

Her father, Richard Jennings, of Sandridge, came of a Somersetshire family who, though long entitled to bear arms, had no crest before the reign of King Henry VIII. For some time they had been settled in Hertfordshire, near St Albans, at Holywell House, on the banks of the Ver. Her grandfather was High Sheriff of Herts in 1625, and, like his son Richard, was repeatedly returned to the House of Commons as Member for St Albans. Their property also included land in Somersetshire and Kent, and may have amounted at this period to about £4000 a year. Curiously enough—in after-light—the Manor of Churchill, in Somersetshire, was, as we have seen, in the possession of the Jennings family for a hundred years.

About Frances Jennings' widowed mother various reports exist. We find references in Somersetshire letters to "your noble mother." In *The New Atalantis* she is described as a sorceress: "the famous Mother Shipton, who by the power and influence of her magic art had placed her daughter in the Court." She certainly bore a questionable reputation, suffered from a violent temper, and found in St James's Palace, where she had apartments, a refuge from hungry creditors who, armed with the law, bayed outside.

In 1673 Frances brought her younger sister Sarah, a child of twelve, into the Court circle. She too was attached to the household of the Duke of York. There she grew up, and at the mature age of fifteen was already a precocious, charming figure. She was not so dazzling as her sister, but she had a brilliancy all her own; fair, flaxen hair, blue eyes sparkling with vivacity, a clear, rosy complexion, firm, engaging lips, and a nose well chiselled, but with a slightly audacious upward tilt. She also, from her tenderest years, was entirely self-possessed and self-confident, and by inheritance she owned, when roused, the temper of the devil.

Towards the end of 1675 she began to dance with John Churchill at balls and parties. He, of course, must have been acquainted with her ever since she arrived at St James's, but after one night of dancing at the end of that year they fell in love with each other. It was a case of love, not at first sight indeed, but at first recognition. It lasted for ever; neither of them thenceforward loved anyone else in their whole lives, though Sarah hated many. The courtship was obstructed and prolonged. Meanwhile Sarah grew to her beauty and power, and her personality, full of force, woman's wiles, and masculine sagacity, became manifest.

She soon quarrelled with her mother. "Mrs Jennings and her daughter, Maid of Honour to the Dutchesse," says a contemporary letter,

have had so great a falling out that they fought; the young one complained to the Dutchesse that if her mother was not put out of St James's where she had lodgings to sanctuary her from debt, she would run away; so Sir Alleyn Apsley was sent to bid the mother remove, who answered "with all her heart; she should never dispute the Duke and Dutchesse's commands, but with the Grace of God she would take her daughter away with her." . . . So rather than part with her, the mother must stay, and all breaches are made up again.¹

But this was only the first round; and a month later we read:

Mrs [Mistress] Sarah Jennings has got the better of her mother, who is commanded to leave the Court and her daughter in itt,

¹ Rutland Papers, *H.M.C.*, XII, ii, 32, 34.

notwithstanding the mother's petition, that she might have her girl with her, the girl saying she is a mad woman.

However, once the eviction had taken place relations were restored between mother and daughter, and they seem to have been attached to one another so long as they dwelt apart.¹

Such is the first we hear of the young lady who now entered John Churchill's life and was eventually to play as large a part in English history as any woman not a sovereign. It is odd that, in spite of all the glare which has beaten upon the story of Sarah Jennings, we do not know with certitude either the house in which she was born, nor that in which she was married to John, nor even the house in which—octogenarian, millionairess, and world figure—she died. Lengthy arguments are exchanged by her train of biographers on all these simple points of fact. Still, it seems probable that she died in London, and still more probable that she was born at St Albans, which she always calls "her native town."

At Blenheim Palace there is a bundle of thirty-seven love-letters of John and Sarah covering a period of about three years, from 1675 to 1677. All are unsigned and all are provokingly undated. All but eight are his. Her contributions are short, severe, and almost repellent. She must have written many more letters, and it is surmised that these were in a more tender vein. She seems, however, only to have kept copies of her warlike missives. She asked him to destroy all

¹ Among the Blenheim MSS. there are a few letters, written from Sarah to her mother after her marriage, which show the terms on which they lived.

Sarah Churchill to Mrs Jennings

"I have thought very often since I left, dear Mother, what was the reason of all the disorder and ill humour the night and morning before I came away; and if I thought I had done anything that you had reason to take ill I should be very angry with myself, but I am very sure I did not intend anything but give you the duty I ought, and if against my will and knowledge I have committed any fault I hope you will forgive it and I beg you will consider how often I stopped the coach as we came home and begged you to come in which I could do for no other reason but for leave [fear] you should get your death, and what reason had you when you came here to say so many cruel things to me and Betty Moody [Mowdie] which I can't but take to myself. The post is going and I can say no more but that I hope I shall see you or hear from you very soon, and that I will ever be your most dutiful daughter whatever you are to me.

"CHURCHILL"



SARAH JENNINGS BEFORE SHE MARRIED
Simon Verelst

This portrait always hung in her dressing-room at Holywell.
By permission of Earl Spencer

her letters, and he must have done so, for none survives except this bundle of thirty-seven, of which hers are copies and his only are originals. In her old age the Duchess several times fondled and reread this correspondence. Her own letters are endorsed in her handwriting, "Some coppys of my letters to Mr Churchill before I was married & not more than 15 years old." She left a request that her chief woman-in-waiting, or secretary, Grace Ridley, should after her death be given the letters in order that she might "burn without reading them." There is an endorsement in the quivering hand of age stating that she had read over all these letters in 1736. Finally, the year before her death, "Read over in 1743 desiring to burn them, but I could not do it."

The reader shall be the judge of the correspondence.¹ The first batch consists entirely of John's letters.

John to Sarah

* My Soul, I love you so truly well that I hope you will be so kind as to let me see you somewhere to-day, since you will not be at Whitehall. I will not name any time, for all hours are alike to me when you will bless me with your sight. You are, and ever shall be, the dear object of my life, for by heavens I will never love anybody but yourself.

* I am just come and have no thought of any joy but that of seeing you. Wherefore I hope you will send me word that you will see me this night.

* My head did ache yesterday to that degree and I was so out of order that nothing should have persuaded me to have gone abroad but the meeting of you who is much dearer than all the world besides to me. If you are not otherwise engaged, I beg you will give me leave to come at eight o'clock.

* I fancy by this time that you are awake, which makes me now send to know how you do, and if your foot will permit you to give me the joy of seeing you in the drawing-room this night.

¹ The letters are here printed from the originals in the Blenheim MSS. with the spelling and punctuation modernized. Those hitherto unpublished are marked with an asterisk.

MARLBOROUGH

Pray let me hear from you, for when I am not with you, the only joy I have is hearing from you.

* My Soul, it is a cruel thing to be forced in a place when I have no hopes of seeing you, for on my word last night seemed very tedious to me ; wherefore I beg you will be so kind to me as to come as often as you can this week, since I am forced to wait [to be in waiting]. I hope you will send me word that you are well and that I shall see you here to-night.

* The reason that I write thus early to you is for fear you should be gone abroad, and this would be a very long day, if you should be so unkind as not to write. I hope, although you do go to Mrs Fortrey, that you will be dressed at night, so that I may see you in the drawing-room. Pray write two words before you go. You ought to do it, for I love you with all my heart and soul.

* I did no sooner know that you were not well, but upon my faith without affectation I was also sick. I hope your keeping your bed yesterday and this night has made you perfectly well, which if it has, I beg that I may then have leave to see you to-night at eight, for believe me that it is an age since I was with you. I do love you so well that I have no patience when I have not hopes of seeing my dear angel, wherefore pray send me word that I shall be blessed and come at eight, till when, my Soul, I will do nothing else but think kindly of you.

* I was so sick all day yesterday that I would have got somebody to have written for me, but the desire I had to see you made me endure all and wait. If you will be at Mrs Berkley's or anywhere else this afternoon where I may see you I will come, if you send me word what hour.

* I hope you were so wise as to value your own health before your duty to the Duchess, so that you did not walk with her at five this morning.

I hope your sitting up has done you no harm, so that you will see me this afternoon, for upon my soul I do love you with all my heart and take joy in nothing but yourself. I do love you with all the truth imaginable, but have patience but for one

week, you shall then see that I will never more do aught that shall look like a fault.

If your happiness can depend upon the esteem and love I have for you, you ought to be the happiest thing breathing, for I have never anybody loved to that height I do you. I love you so well that your happiness I prefer much above my own; and if you think meeting me is what you ought not to do, or that it will disquiet you, I do promise you I will never press you more to do it. As I prefer your happiness above my own, so I hope you will sometimes think how well I love you; and what you can do without doing yourself an injury, I hope you will be so kind as to do it—I mean in letting me see that you wish me better than the rest of mankind; and in return I swear to you that I never will love anything but your dear self, which has made so sure a conquest of me that, had I the will, I have not the power ever to break my chains. Pray let me hear from you, and know if I shall be so happy as to see you to-night.

I was last night at the ball, in hopes to have seen what I love above my own soul, but I was not so happy, for I could see you nowhere, so that I did not stay above an hour. I would have written sooner, but that I was afraid you went to bed so late that it would disturb you.

Pray see which of these two puppies you like best, and that keep; for the bitch cannot let them suck any longer. They are above three weeks old, so that if you give it warm milk it will not die. Pray let me hear from you, and at what time you will be so kind as to let me come to you to-night. Pray, if you have nothing to do, let it be the latest [earliest], for I never am truly happy but when I am with you.

We now see the falling of shadows upon the sunlit path. We cannot tell their cause, whether they come from passing clouds or from some solid obstruction. We do not know the reason, nor even the year. We must realize that these written fragments, luckily preserved, represent only a tiny part of all that happened in nearly a thousand days of two young lives.

* I stayed last night in the drawing-room expecting your coming back, for I could have wished that we had not parted until you had given me hopes of seeing you, for, my soul, there is no pain

so great to me, as that when I fear you do not love me ; but I hope I shall never live to see you less kind to me than you are. I am sure I will never deserve it, for I will by all that is good love you as long as I live. I beg you will let me see you as often as you can, which I am sure you ought to do if you care for my love, since every time I see you I still find new charms in you ; therefore do not be so ill-natured as to believe any lies that may be told you of me, for on my faith I do not only now love you but do desire to do it as long as I live. If you can have time before you go to church, pray let me hear from you.

* I was last night above an hour in the Bedchamber still expecting every one that came in it should be you, but at last I went to Mrs Brownley's, where I found Mrs Mowdie,¹ who told me that you were with your sister, so that you would not be seen that night ; so I went to Whitehall to find out the Duke, for when I know that you will not appear I do not care to be at St James's. For 'tis you and you only I care to see, for by all that is good I do with all the truth imaginable love you. Pray let me hear from you, and I beg that I may be blessed this night in being with you. I hope you will like the waistcoat ; I do assure you there is not such another to be had in England.

* My Lord Mulgrave's page is come to let me know that they stay for me, but I cannot stir before I write to know how you do, and if you will be at Mrs Berkley's and whether you would have me come or no, for I will never do aught that you will not have me do.

My Soul, I go with the heaviest heart that ever man did, for by all that is good I love you with all my heart and soul, and I am sure that as long as I live you shall have no just reason to believe the contrary. If you are unkind, I love [you] so well that I cannot live, for you are my life, my soul, my all that I hold dear in this world ; therefore do not make so ungrateful a return as not to write. If you have charity you will not only write, but you will write kindly, for it is on you that depends the quiet of my soul. Had I fitting words to express my love, it would not then be in your power to refuse what I beg with tears in my eyes, that you would love me as I will by heavens do you.

¹ Mrs Mowdie was Sarah's waiting-woman and to some extent chaperone.

³⁴
I am just come, and have
no thoughts of any body,
but that of seeing you,
wherefore I hope you will
send me word that you
will see me this night.

SARAH

To show you how unreasonable you are in accusing me, I dare swear you yourself will own that your going from me in the Duchess's drawing-room did show as much contempt as was possible. I may grieve at it, but I will no more complain when you do it, for I suppose it is what pleases your humour. I cannot imagine what you meant by your saying I laughed at you at the Duke's side, for I was so far from that, that had it not been for shame I could have cried. And [as] for being in haste to go to the Park, after you went, I stood near a quarter of an hour, I believe, without knowing what I did. Although at Whitehall you told me I should not come, yet I walked twice to the Duke's back-stairs, but there was no Mrs Mowdie; and when I went to my Lord Duras's, I would not go the same way they did but came again down the back-stairs; and when I went away, I did not go in my chair, but made it follow me, because I would see if there was any light in your chamber, but I saw none. Could you see my heart you would not be so cruel as to say I do not love you, for by all that is good I love you and only you. If I may have the happiness of seeing you to-night, pray let me know, and believe that I am never truly pleased but when I am with you.

Thus time slipped by, and ardent courtship must have lasted far into its second year. Sarah's sister Frances, after rejecting so many suitors, royal or honourable, was already married to Lord Hamilton, a man of charm and distinction, but of no great wealth. Sarah, approaching seventeen, was alone. She had chased away her mother, and the man she loved and who loved her so well had not yet spoken the decisive word.

Meanwhile the war continued; but such few records of John Churchill as exist for the years 1675, 1676, and 1677 are conclusive against his having fought any more on the Continent. His name is never mentioned in any of the operations.¹ The regiment which he had formerly commanded, withering for lack of drafts, was incorporated in Monmouth's

¹ On April 13, 1675, the Jesuit Father St Germaine wrote from Flanders to his correspondent in England, "I have wrote many times these three months about being assured that neither Churchill nor Clarke would come over any more, . . . but hearing nothing from you it makes me conclude . . . there is nothing to be done in it." (St Germaine to E. Coleman, April 13, 1675; *H.M.C.*, xiii, App. vi, p. 108.)

Royal English regiment in May 1675. It is therefore almost certain that he took no part in this year's campaign either with Turenne or elsewhere.¹

In August we read of him hastening to Paris. We can but guess at his mission. Since 1673 he had been Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Duke of York. On August 9, 1675, the French Ambassador in England wrote to Louis XIV describing an interview with James at which the Duke had asked for an immediate subsidy from the French King to free his brother from the need of summoning Parliament.² In view of the fact that four years later James was to send Churchill over to Paris to make a similar request for a subsidy, and that he was already well known at Versailles, it is not unlikely that he was sent to Paris to reinforce his master's petition. A warrant showing that in October he had permission to import from France free of duty his silver plate seems to mark the end of his stay abroad.³ In September 1676 he was a member of a court-martial convened in London to try an officer for an assault on the governor of Plymouth. There is therefore no doubt that he spent these years mainly at Court, and that he was increasingly employed in diplomatic work and at his ordinary duties in the Duke of York's household.

Towards the end of this year the Duke of Monmouth expressed his dissatisfaction with the Lieutenant-Colonel of his Royal English regiment, which was serving with the French Army against the Dutch, and proposed to Louis XIV that the command should be transferred to Churchill. Justin MacCartie, a nephew of the Duke of Ormonde, who when an ensign had accompanied Feverham to the siege of Maestricht, also sought this appoint-

¹ Cf. Atkinson, pp. 65-66.

² *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 116, ff. 173 seq.

³ C.S.P. (*Treasury Books*), 1672-75, p. 830, describes the contents of Churchill's two trunks of silver recently brought out of France in October—to wit, "one basin, 2 great dishes, 12 small dishes, 2 massarines, 3 doz. of plates, 2 flagons, 4 candlesticks, 2 ewers, 2 stands, 2 chafing dishes, 1 vinegar pot, 1 sugar pot, 1 mustard pot, 1 pair of snuffers and its case, 4 salts, 6 cups, 12 spoons, 12 forks, 12 hafts, one great spoon, one chamber pot, one tea pot, one chocolate pot, one great cup, one skillet, 2 Turkey cups." Several pieces of this plate of French make are still preserved at Althorpe.

ment. Courtin, the French Ambassador, laid the situation before Louvois, together with elaborate and scandalous accounts of John's love-affairs. Louvois replied that Churchill appeared to be too much taken up with the ladies to devote his whole-hearted affection to a regiment. He would give, Louvois said, "more satisfaction to a rich and faded mistress, than to a monarch who did not want to have dishonourable and dishonoured carpet knights in his armies." Courtin, however, considered Churchill a far abler officer than his competitor, and the post was undoubtedly offered him. It was Churchill who refused. "Mr Churchill," reported the Ambassador, whose news was now certainly up to date, "prefers to serve the very pretty sister [Sarah Jennings] of Lady Hamilton than to be lieutenant-colonel in Monmouth's regiment."¹

This phase in Churchill's life is significant. It marks more clearly than anything else the intensity of his passion for Sarah, before which adventure, ambition, and "lucre" alike lost their power. There may, of course, have been more general reasons as well for his not wishing to take further service under the French. He had probably begun to share the prejudices of most Englishmen of this time against Louis XIV's assaults on the Protestant Dutch. He had experienced at Enzheim the French profusion with their hired troops. Better to "sport with Amaryllis in the shade" than lease himself as a French popinjay! Anyhow, he refused. Mars was quite decidedly set aside for Venus. However, the estrangement was not final.

During this same year, 1676, Sir Winston Churchill and his wife became concerned at the attachment of their son to Sarah Jennings. They did not see how he could make a career for himself unless he married money. To this, with his looks and prowess, he might well aspire. They fixed their eyes upon Catharine Sedley, daughter and heiress of Sir Charles Sedley, a man renowned for his wit and his wealth. Catharine

¹ November 19/29, 1676. *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 120 C, f. 231; cf. ff. 206, 248, etc. This account is based on the original letters in the French Foreign Office, and corrects erroneous accounts in Wolsley and in Forneron's *Louise de Kéroualle*. Wolsley, indeed, places part of this story in 1674 and part in 1676.

Sedley was also of the household of the Duke of York. By some accounts she was tall, plain, thin, angular, but had a pair of fine eyes. Her portrait, however, is by no means unprepossessing; and she already inherited her father's caustic wit. She exerted her attractions in her own way, and, though not admired, was both liked and feared. Ultimately, after the parental hopes had failed to unite her to John Churchill, she became, in what seemed almost rotation for the maids of honour, the Duke of York's mistress. Although she was a staunch Protestant with an unconcealed scorn of priests and Papists, he was for some years devoted to her, and a time was to come when she seemed about to play a decisive part in politics. Several of her sayings have been preserved. When, after the Revolution, Queen Mary slighted her at Court, she boldly reproached her, saying, "Remember, ma'am, if I broke one of the commandments *with* your father, you have broken another *against* him." Speaking generally of James II's mistresses, including Arabella, Lady Bellasis, and herself, she remarked with much detachment, "What he saw in any of us, I cannot tell. We were all plain, and if any of us had had wit, he would not have understood it." Altogether she was by no means a negligible personality, and had treasures of her own to bestow besides her father's fortune.

The news of these parental machinations must have been swiftly carried to Sarah. How far, if at all, John lent himself to them, at what point they begin to darken the love-letters, we cannot tell. Certainly the arguments which Sir Winston and his wife could deploy were as serious and matter-of-fact as any which could ever be brought to bear upon a son. We may imagine some of them.

"You have your foot on the ladder of fortune. You have already mounted several important rungs. Every one says you have a great future before you. Every one knows you have not got—apart from the annuity or your pay—a penny behind you. How can you on a mere whim compromise your whole future life? Catharine Sedley is known to be a most agreeable woman. She holds her own in any company. The Duke listens to all she says, and the whole Court

laughs at her jests. She is asked everywhere. Women have beauties of mind quite as attractive, except to enamoured youth, as those of body. Sir Charles is a really wealthy man, solid, long-established, with fine houses, broad acres, and failing health. She is his only child. With his fortune and her humour and sagacity behind you, all these anxieties which have gnawed your life, all that poverty which has pursued us since your infancy, would be swept away. You could look any man in the face and your career would be assured.

“Moreover, do you really think this little Jennings could be a companion to you? Although she is only a child, little more than half your age, she has proved herself a spitfire and a termagant. Look at the way she treats you—as if you were a lackey. You have told us enough of your relations with her—and, indeed, it is the talk of the Court—to show that she is just humiliating you, twirling you round her finger for her own glorification. Did she not say only last week to So-and-so how she could make you do this, that, or anything? Even if she had all Catharine’s money we would beg you for your peace of mind, with all the experience of the older generation, not to take this foolish step. It would be a decision utterly out of keeping with your character, with your frugal life—never throwing any expense on us, always living within your income—with all your prudence and care for the future. You would be committing a folly, and the one kind of folly we were always sure you would never commit.

“Lastly, think of her. Are you really doing her justice in marrying her? She has come to Court under good protection. She could never hold a candle to her sister, but she may well hope to marry into the peerage. There is the Earl of Lindsay, who could give her a fine position. He is paying her a great deal of attention. Would she ever be happy with love in a cottage? Would she not drag you down and sink with you?” “Believe me, my son, I, your father,” Sir Winston might have said, “pillaged by the Roundheads, uprooted from my lands for my loyalty, have had a hard time. I can give nothing to you or your bride but the shelter of my roof at Mintern. You know how we live there. How would she

put up with that ? We have never been able to do more than hold up our heads. These are rough times. They are not getting better. By yielding to this absurd fancy you will ruin her life as well as your own, and throw a burden upon us which, as you know, we cannot bear. I am to meet Sir Charles next week. He is a great believer in you. He has heard things about you from the French. It is said that among the younger men none is your master in the land service. I never commanded more than a cavalry troop, but you at half my age are almost a general. But are you not throwing away your military career as well ? ”

How far did John yield to all this ? He was no paragon. All around was the corrupt, intriguing Court with its busy marriage market. In those days English parents disposed their children's fortunes much as the French do now. Winston himself had perhaps been betrothed at fourteen or fifteen, and had made a happy, successful family life. We do not believe that John ever weakened in his purpose. Certainly he never wavered in his love. No doubt he weighed with deep anxiety the course which he should take. All the habit of his mind was farsighted. “ In the bloom of his youth,” says Macaulay, “ he loved lucre more than wine or women.” However, he loved Sarah more than all. But how were they to live ? This was the cold, brutal, commonplace, inexorable question that baffled his judgment and tied his tongue.

Her situation, as she learned about the family negotiations and saw her lover oppressed and abstracted, was cruel. Already, with discerning feminine eye, she had marked him for her own. Now wealth and worldly wisdom were to intervene and snatch him from her. Already barriers seemed to be growing between them, and it was here that the vital truth of her purpose saved all. Weakness on her part in dealing with him might perhaps have been fatal. She maintained towards him a steady, bayonet-bristling front. Between perfect love, absolute unity, and scorn and fury such as few souls are capable of, there was no middle choice. Sometimes, indeed, her ordeal in public was more than she could bear. Scores of peering, knowing eyes

were upon her. Her tears were seen at some revel, and the French Ambassador wrote a sneering letter about them for the gossips of Versailles.

* There was a small ball last Friday at the Duchess of York's where Lady Hamilton's sister who is uncommonly good-looking had far more wish to cry than to dance. Churchill who is her suitor says that he is attacked by consumption and must take the air in France. I only wish I were as well as he. The truth is that he wishes to free himself from intrigues. His father urges him to marry one of his relations who is very rich and very ugly, and will not consent to his marriage with Miss Jennings. He is also said to be not a little avaricious and I hear from the various Court ladies that he has pillaged the Duchess of Cleveland, and that she has given him more than the value of 100,000 livres. They make out that it is he who has quitted her and that she has taken herself off in chagrin to France to rearrange her affairs. If Churchill crosses the sea, she will be able to patch things up with him. Meanwhile she writes agreeably to the Duchess of Sussex conjuring her to go with her husband to the country and to follow her advice but not her example.¹

Thus Courtin. We must make allowance for his own love of scandal, and for the palates he sought to spice : but here, at any rate, we have a definite situation. Courtin's letter is dated November 27, 1676. We see that John's relations with Barbara have ended ; that his father is pressing him to marry Catharine Sedley ; that he is deeply in love with Sarah, but does not feel justified in his poverty in proposing marriage ; that she is indignant at his delay and miserable about the other women and all the uncertainty and the gossip. We see her magnificent in her prolonged ordeal. We see John for the only time in these pages meditating flight from a field the difficulties of which seemed for the moment beyond his sagacious strength. Well is it said that the course of true love never did run smooth. The next chapter will, however, carry the lovers to their hearts' desire.

¹ Courtin to Louvois, November 27/December 7, 1676 ; *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 120 C, f. 248.

CHAPTER VIII

MARRIAGE

(1676-1678)

WE now approach the delicate question of how John freed himself from the Duchess of Cleveland. Unquestionably towards the end of 1676 he quitted Barbara for Sarah. Was he "off with the old love before he was on with the new"? Or was it one of those familiar dissolving views, where one picture fades gradually away and the other grows into gleaming, vivid life? Gossip and scandal there is a-plenty; evidence there is none. Of course, a married woman separated from her husband, unfaithful to him, notoriously licentious, who has a young man in the twenties as her lover, must expect that a time will come when her gay companion will turn serious, when all the charms and pleasures she can bestow will pall and cloy, and when he will obey the mysterious command of a man's spirit to unite himself for ever, by every tie which nature and faith can proffer, to a being all his own. But Barbara took it very ill, and after a brief attempt to console herself with Wycherley, the playwright, she withdrew from England altogether and took up her abode in Paris. Here she became intimate with Montagu, the English Ambassador already mentioned, with results which after a while emerged upon the stage of history.

We cannot dismiss this topic without recourse to Mrs Manley. She is Lord Macaulay's witness; and, counter-signed by his great name, cannot be swept incontinently back into the cesspool from which she should never have crawled. The witness is voluble where trustworthy records are silent upon this transference of Churchill's affections. She throws light of a certain character where the lamps of truth are dim. In her masterpieces, *The New Atalantis* and *Queen Zarah*, she gives two mutually destructive accounts of the breach between John and Barbara. *The New Atalantis* describes how Churchill,

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tired of the Duchess of Cleveland and having fallen in love with Sarah Jennings, used the following stratagem to give himself the best of the argument.

He persuaded a young lord—Mrs Manley says Lord Dover, but this is plainly impossible—who was Barbara's ardent admirer to lodge in his apartments. One day after his bath, when he was in scanty attire upon the couch, with his face concealed, apparently sleeping, Barbara, coming to see John, entered the room. Macaulay's witness, Mrs Manley, asserts that, struck by the beauty of the young lord's form, she embraced him, and that not until much had passed did his voice recall her to the fact that he was a comparative stranger. Hot-foot upon this surprise came a knocking at the door. Churchill broke in and, suitably scandalized at the scene, delivered himself up to transports of simulated fury. He averred that she was the most inconstant of women, that he would never see her again, and would that very day marry Sarah Jennings, of whom she was already jealous. On which he departed, free. Such is Mrs Manley's first account.

The second account, published some years after in *Queen Zarah*, is different.¹ The technique is the same, but the facts are opposite. The parts played by the characters and their sexes are reversed. Here the tale begins with Sarah deeply in love with John. She has met him at balls and parties where he was so attractive and danced so well that "every step he took carried death with it." Sarah's mother, represented by Mrs Manley as an experienced, disreputable woman, resolved to aid her daughter's sentiments. She therefore contrived to bring Barbara and Sarah together. Barbara, who took a great liking to Sarah and did not know that she was her rival, invited Sarah to her apartments—those beautiful, elegant rooms where she was wont in her ordinary duty to receive the King. Thither Sarah repaired, and as her hostess was late—lured away upon a pretext—for better security disrobed and got into bed. Again suddenly the door opened, and John

¹ It is not quite certain that Mrs Manley was the author of *Queen Zarah*, but if she was not, the pamphlet was certainly a product of the same factory and by a scribe of the same kidney.

on one of his customary visits to Barbara entered. Struck and inspired by Sarah's dazzling beauty, he immediately declared his overwhelming love for her. Thereupon once more the door opened, and this time it was her mother who appeared. She in her turn was scandalized. Alleging that her daughter was now hopelessly compromised, and urging that John had declared his love for her in her hearing, she demanded immediate marriage as the only method of preventing the humiliation of her daughter, and as the surest way by which John could sever once and for all the ties which bound him to Barbara. While the future Captain-General was temporarily disconcerted by this turn of events, Mrs Jennings produced a priest, and before anyone could say Jack Robinson the marriage ceremony was accomplished. The modern reader, accustomed to the Hollywood films, will have already foreseen the last act of the drama: the incursion of the Duchess of Cleveland, and her fury as she gradually discovered that her rival had been married to her lover in her own apartments, to which she had herself invited her.

We have set out these two tales as told by Macaulay's witness in abridged and expurgated form. The reader may choose the one or the other, but evidently not both. Or, again, he may believe that these are only the lying inventions of a prurient and filthy-minded underworld, served up to those who relish them and paid for by party interest and political malice. We shall not attempt to sway his judgment. It will depend entirely upon his character.

Let us return to the love-letters, which plead John's cause to posterity, as well as to Sarah. The deadlock in their affairs continued, and she rightly challenged him to end it or to leave her.

Sarah to John

If it were true that you have that passion for me which you say you have, you would find out some way to make yourself happy—it is in your power. Therefore press me no more to see you, since it is what I cannot in honour approve of, and if I have done too much, be so just as to consider who was the cause of it.

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John to Sarah

As for the power you say you have over yourself, I do no ways at all doubt of it, for I swear to you I do not think you love me, so that I am very easily persuaded that my letters have no charms for you, since I am so much a slave to your charms as to own to you that I love you above my own life, which by all that is holy I do. You must give me leave to beg that you will not condemn me for a vain fool that I did believe you did love me, since both you and your actions did oblige me to that belief in which heaven knows I took so much joy that from henceforward my life must be a torment to me for it. You say I pretend a passion to you when I have other things in my head. I cannot imagine what you mean by it, for I vow to God you do so entirely possess my thoughts that I think of nothing else in this world but your dear self. I do not, by all that is good, say this that I think it will move you to pity me, for I do despair of your love ; but it is to let you see how unjust you are, and that I must ever love you as long as I have breath, do what you will. I do not expect in return that you should either write or speak to me, since you think it is what may do you a prejudice ; but I have a thing to beg which I hope you will not be so barbarous as to deny me. It is that you will give me leave to do what I cannot help, which is to adore you as long as I live, and in return I will study how I may deserve, although not have, your love. I am persuaded that I have said impertinent things enough to anger you, for which I do with all my heart beg your pardon, and do assure you that from henceforward I will approach and think of you with the same devotion as to my God.

John to Sarah

You complain of my unkindness, but would not be kind yourself in answering my letter, although I begged you to do it. The Duchess goes to a new play to-day, and afterwards to the Duchess of Monmouth's, there to dance. I desire that you will not go thither, but make an excuse, and give me leave to come to you. Pray let me know what you do intend, and if you go to the play ; for if you do, then I will do what I can to go, if [although] the Duke does not. Your not writing to me made me very uneasy, for I was afraid it was want of kindness in you, which I am sure I will never deserve by any action of mine.

MARLBOROUGH

Sarah to John

As for seeing you I am resolved I never will in private nor in public if I could help it. As for the last I fear it will be some time before I can order so as to be out of your way of seeing me. But surely you must confess that you have been the falsest creature¹ upon earth to me. I must own that I believe that I shall suffer a great deal of trouble, but I will bear it, and give God thanks, though too late I see my error.

Here the door is firmly closed, and then opened with a chink again.

John to Sarah

It is not reasonable that you should have a doubt but that I love you above all expression, which by heaven I do. It is not possible to do anything to let you see your power more than my obedience to your commands of leaving you, when my tyrant-heart aches me to make me disobey ; but it were much better it should break than to displease you. I will not, dearest, ask or hope to hear from you unless your charity pities me and will so far plead for me as to tell you that a man dying for you may hope that you will be so kind to him as to make a distinction betwixt him and the rest of his sex. I do love and adore you with all my heart and soul—so much that by all that is good I do and ever will be better pleased with your happiness than my own ; but oh, my soul, if we might be both happy, what inexpressible joy would that be ! But I will not think of any content but what you shall think fit to give, for 'tis you alone I love, so that if you are kind but one minute, that will make me happier than all the world can besides. I will not dare to expect more favour than you shall think fit to give, but could you ever love me, I think the happiness would be so great that it would make me immortal.

Sarah to John

I am as little satisfied with this letter as I have been with many others, for I find all you will say is only to amuse me and make me think you have a passion for me, when in reality there is no such thing. You have reason to think it strange that I write to you after my last, where I protested that I would never write nor speak to you more ; but as you know how much kindness

¹ Perhaps a reference to the Catharine Sedley episode.

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I had for you, you can't wonder or blame me if I try once more, to hear what you can say for your justification. But this I must warn you of—that you don't hold disputes, as you have done always, and to keep me from answering of you, and yourself from saying what I expect from you, for if you go on in that manner I will leave you that moment, and never hear you speak more whilst I have life. Therefore pray consider if, with honour to me and satisfaction to yourself, I can see you ; for if it be only to repeat those things which you said so oft, I shall think you the worst of men, and the most ungrateful ; and 'tis to no purpose to imagine that I will be made ridiculous in the world when it is in your power to make me otherwise.

John to Sarah

Yours last night found me so sick that I thought I should have died, and I have now so excessive a headache that I should not stir out all day but that the Duchess has sent me word that the Duke will see me this afternoon, so that at night I shall have the happiness to see you in the drawing-room. I cannot remember what it was I said to you that you took so ill, but one thing I do assure you, that I will never say or do aught willingly that I think you may take ill. Ah, my soul, did you love so well as I, you could never have refused my letter so barbarously as you did, for if reason had bade you do it, love would never have permitted it. But I will complain no more of it, but hope time and the truth of my love will make you love better.

John to Sarah

I have been so extreme ill with the headache all this morning that I have not had courage to write to know how you do ; but your being well is what I prefer much above my own health. Therefore pray send me word, for if you are not in pain I cannot then be much troubled, for were it not for the joy I take in the thought that you love me, I should not care how soon I died ; for by all that is good I love you so well that I wish from my soul that that minute that you leave loving me, that I may die, for life after that would be to me but one perpetual torment. If the Duchess sees company, I hope you will be there ; but if she does not, I beg you will then let me see you in your chamber, if it be but for one hour. If you are not in the drawing-room, you must then send me word at what hour I shall come.

Sarah to John

At four o'clock I would see you, but that would hinder you from seeing the play, which I fear would be a great affliction to you, and increase the pain in your head, which would be out of anybody's power to ease until the next new play. Therefore, pray consider, and without any compliment to me, send me word if you can come to me without any prejudice to your health.

This unkind sarcasm drew probably the only resentful reply which John ever penned in all his correspondence with Sarah. The letter does not exist; but we can judge its character by his covering note to her waiting-woman, whose support he had doubtless enlisted.

Colonel John Churchill to Mrs Elizabeth Mowdie

Your mistress's usage to me is so barbarous that sure she must be the worst woman in the world, or else she would not be thus ill-natured. I have sent a letter which I desire you will give her. It is very reasonable for her to take it, because it will be then in her power never to be troubled with me more, if she pleases. I do love her with all my soul, but will not trouble her, for if I cannot have her love, I shall despise her pity. For the sake of what she has already done, let her read my letter and answer it, and not use me thus like a footman.

This was the climax of the correspondence. Sarah's response shows that she realized how deeply he was distressed and how critical their relations had become. She held out an offended hand, and he made haste to clasp it. Some days evidently passed before he wrote again, and this time his rebellious mood had vanished.

Sarah to John

I have done nothing to deserve such a kind of letter as you have writ to me, and therefore I don't know what answer to give; but I find you have a very ill opinion of me, and therefore I can't help being angry with myself for having had too good a one of you; for if I had as little love as yourself, I have been told enough of you to make me hate you, and then I believe I should have been more happy than I am like to be now. However, if you can be so well contented never to see me as

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I think you can by what you say, I will believe you ; though I have not other people ; and after you are satisfied that I have not broke my word, you shall have it in your power to see me or not—and if you are contented without it I shall be extremely pleased.

John to Sarah

It would have been much kinder in you, if you had been pleased to have been so good-natured to have found time to have written to me yesterday, especially since you are resolved not to appear when I might see you. But I am resolved to take nothing ill but to be your slave as long as I live, and so to think all things well that you do.

This was the only surrender to which the Duke of Marlborough was ever forced. It was to the fan of a chit of seventeen. Moreover, so far as we have been able to ascertain, his courtship of Sarah affords the only occasions in his life of hazards and heart-shaking ordeals when he was ever frightened. Neither the heat of battle nor the long-drawn anxieties of conspiracy, neither the unsanctioned responsibilities of the march to the Danube nor the tortuous secret negotiations with the Jacobite Court, ever disturbed the poise of that calm, reasonable, resolute mind. But in this love-story we see him plainly panic-stricken. The terror that he and Sarah might miss one another, might drift apart, might pass and sail away like ships in the night, overpowered him. A man who cared less could have played this game of love with the sprightly Sarah much better than he. A little calculation, a little adroitness, some studied withdrawals, some counter-flirtation, all these were the arts which in every other field he used with innate skill. He has none of them now. He begs and prays with bald, homely, pitiful reiteration. We see the power of the light which sometimes shines upon the soul. These two belonged to one another, and, with all their faults, placarded as we know them, their union was true as few things of which we have experience here are true. And at this moment in the depth of his spirit, with the urge of uncounted generations pressing forward, he feared lest it might be cast away.

We now reach at least the year 1677, and with it the final phase of the correspondence. It seems plain that they are engaged. The difficulties that remain are only those of time and means. He writes of an interview with his father, of the importance of Sarah not angering the Duchess of York, and of business arrangements for their future.

John to Sarah

It was unkind of you to go away last night since you knew that I came for no other purpose but to have the joy of seeing you, but I will not believe it was for want of love, for you are all goodness, the thought of which makes me love you above my own soul. If you shall be in the drawing-room to-night, send me word at what hour, so that I may order it so to be there at the same hour. I am now in my chamber, and will stay there as long as I can in hopes I may hear from you.

Sarah to John

I am willing to satisfy the world and you that I am not now in the wrong, and therefore I give you leave to come to-night—not that I can be persuaded you can ever justify yourself, but I do it that I may be freed from the troubles of ever hearing from you more.

John to Sarah

When I left my father last night, on purpose to come and speak with you, I did not believe that you would have been so unkind as to have gone away the minute I came in, fearing that I might else have spoke to you, which indeed I should have been very glad to have done. I beg you will give me leave to see you this night, at what hour you please. Pray let me hear from you, and if you do not think me impertinent for asking, I should be glad to know what made you go away.

John to Sarah

*I am just going to Richmond, but would not go until I had first paid my duty to you, who is and ever shall be the first thing in my thought. I shall come back time enough to be according as you appointed, but I believe it will be better if you let it be at ten, for I would be glad you would wait [be in

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waiting], you having not waited last night. I am sure if you love me, you will not at this anger the Duchess ; therefore pray do wait, and be so kind to me as to believe that I have no thought but what is all kindness to you, for I despair to live but to convince you how truly well I love you. Pray let me at my return find two words of answer.

John to Sarah

* You are very unjust in saying that I love you less than I did, for by all that is good I think I love better than ever I did. I am very sorry that you are not well and that I shall not see you to-day. I was three acts at the play for no other reason but that of seeing you. I was in the drawing-room almost an hour expecting you, which Mr Berkley can witness for me, for he was with me. I desire you will not choose any [trustees?] or do anything in that business until I speak with you. Pray be so kind to me as to write and assure me that you can be happy if I love you ever, as by heavens I will.

Frances, Lady Hamilton, had now arrived upon the scene, and Sarah seems to have threatened him with plans for going abroad with her.

John to Sarah

When I writ to you last night I thought I writ to the one that loved me ; but your unkind, indifferent letter this morning confirms me of what I have before been afraid of, which is that your sister can govern your passion as she pleases. My heart is ready to break. I wish 'twere over, for since you are grown so indifferent, death is the only thing that can ease me. If that the Duchess could not have effected this, I was resolved to have made another proposal to her, which I am confident she might have effected, but it would not have brought so much money as this. But now I must think no more on it, since you say we cannot be happy. If they should do the first I wish with all my soul that my fortune had been so considerable as that it might have made you happier than your going out with your sister to France will do ; for I know 'tis the joy you propose in that, that makes you think me faulty. I do, and must as long as I live, love you to distraction, but would not, to make myself the happiest man breathing, press you to ought that you think will make you unhappy. Madame, methinks it is no unreasonable

request to beg to see you in your chamber to-night. Pray let me hear presently two words, and say I shall; and, in return, I swear to you if you command my death I will die.

This last is endorsed in Sarah's handwriting, "This letter was when he was to settle the time of marrying me with the Dutches." One by one, as in a methodical siege, he had removed the obstacles which had barred the way. He had put aside his military prospects. Barbara was gone. Catharine was gone. The parents, still perhaps protesting, had given way. Evidently he had now in sight some means of livelihood sufficient for him and Sarah. Even now she did not soften her hectoring tone. But everything was settled.

Sarah to John

If your intentions are honourable,¹ and what I have reason to expect, you need not fear my sister's coming can make any change in me, or that it is in the power of anybody to alter me but yourself, and I am at this time satisfied that you will never do anything out of reason, which you must do if you ever are untrue to me.

Sarah to John

I have made many reflections upon what you said to me last night, and I am of the opinion that could the Duchess obtain what you ask her, you might be more unhappy than if it cannot be had. Therefore, as I have always shown more kindness for you than perhaps I ought, I am resolved to give you one mark more—and that is, to desire you to say nothing of it to the Duchess upon my account; and your own interest when I am not concerned in it, will probably compass what will make you much happier than this can ever do.

We now come to the marriage. No one knows exactly or for certain when or where it took place. For several months it was kept secret. That poverty rather than parental opposition was the cause is proved by a remarkable fact. John's grandfather had strictly entailed his estates, and Sir Winston was only tenant for life. He was heavily in debt, and was now forced to appeal to his son for help. Just at the

¹ This phrase has been fastened on by some to suggest that Churchill was not seeking marriage. The natural sequence of the letters shows that he was at this very time arranging the basis of their future married life.

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moment when some assured prospects were most necessary to his heart's desire, John was asked to surrender his inheritance. He did so for his father's sake. Part of the property was realized, and Sir Winston's debts were paid. At his death the remnant went to the other children. John, therefore, by his own act disinherited himself.¹ This was a singular example of filial duty in a young man desperately in love and longing to marry.

He could not keep his wife in any suitable conditions at the Court. Once the marriage was announced all sorts of things would be expected. Mary of Modena, "the Dutchesse" of the letters, was the good fairy. She was the partisan of this love-match; she used all her power to help the lovers. Evidently something had to be done to provide them with some means of living. Although Sarah had expectations, and John had his pay and, of course, his £500 a year, "the infamous wages," these were very small resources for the world in which they lived. The future Queen threw herself into the marriage, and her generous, feminine, and romantic instincts were stirred. "None but the brave," she might well have exclaimed, "deserves the fair." We have seen in the letters traces of various plans which the Duchess favoured or tried in order to make some provision for the lovers. We do not know what arrangements were made. Something, at any rate, was assured. Some time in the winter of 1677-78, probably in Mary of Modena's apartments, the sacred words were pronounced, and John and Sarah were man and wife. There is a strong local tradition at Newsells Park, Royston, Hertfordshire, then in the possession of a branch of the Jennings family, that the dining-room had been specially built for the festivities of Sarah Jennings' marriage. Probably they passed their honeymoon here.²

¹ See Appendix, II.

² A writer in *Notes and Queries* (No. 151, 1926, p. 199) says, "Newsells Park, Royston, . . . had its dining-room specially built in order to give room for the festivities of the marriage of Sarah Jennings and John Churchill." The present owner of Newsells Park, Captain Sir Humphrey de Trafford, very kindly had the local parish registers examined to see if the marriage took place there, but there is no trace of it.

Macaulay tells the love-story of John and Sarah in the following passage : ¹

He must have been enamoured indeed. For he had little property except the annuity which he had bought with the infamous wages bestowed on him by the Duchess of Cleveland : he was insatiable of riches : Sarah was poor ; and a plain girl with a large fortune was proposed to him. His love, after a struggle, prevailed over his avarice : marriage only strengthened his passion ; and, to the last hour of his life, Sarah enjoyed the pleasure and distinction of being the one human being who was able to mislead that farsighted and sure-footed judgment, who was fervently loved by that cold heart, and who was servilely feared by that intrepid spirit.

How often men reveal their own secrets unconsciously when affronting others ! This sentence, " He must have been enamoured indeed," shows the sphere to which Macaulay relegates love and the limits within which, from his personal experiences, he supposed it to be confined. It is to him a localized aberration which distorts judgment, and not a sublime passion which expresses and dominates all being. On this Paget has written finely :

Lord Macaulay's intimate acquaintance, if not with human nature, at any rate with the writings of those who, in all ages and all languages, have most deeply stirred the heart of man, might have told him that [that] tale of young passionate love mellowing into deep and tender affection, living on linked to eternity, stronger than death and deeper than the grave, was fitly the object of feelings far different from those which it appears to waken in his breast. . . . It is a singular fact that two of the most vigorous writers of the English language appear to be in total ignorance of all the feelings which take their rise from the passion of love. We know of no single line that has fallen from the pen of Swift or from that of Lord Macaulay, which indicates any sympathy with that passion which affords in the greater number of minds the most powerful of all motives. The love of Churchill and Sarah Jennings seems to inspire Lord Macaulay with much the same feelings as those with which a certain

¹ *History*, ii, 317.

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personage, whom Dr Johnson used to call "the first Whig," regarded the happiness of our first parents in the Garden of Eden.¹

The explanation of Macaulay's sourness is not, however, obscure. He had decided in the plan of his history that Marlborough was to be presented as the most odious figure in his cast. He was the villain who "in the bloom of youth loved lucre more than wine or women . . . and who at the height of greatness loved lucre more than power or fame." This indictment, the most detestable that can be conceived, had to be sustained. The whole story of the courtship, marriage, and lifelong union of John and Sarah was in brutal conflict with the great historian's theme. The facts could not be disputed. They proclaim the glory of that wedlock in which the vast majority of civilized mankind find happiness and salvation in a precarious world. After nearly a quarter of a century of married life Churchill, sailing for the wars from Margate quay, wrote to his wife :

It is impossible to express with what a heavy heart I parted with you when I was at the waterside. I could have given my life to have come back, though I knew my own weakness so much I durst not, for I should have exposed myself to the company. I did for a great while have a perspective glass looking upon the cliffs in hopes I might have had one sight of you.²

Sarah, in a letter certainly later than 1689, and probably when he was in the Tower, wrote :

Wherever you are whilst I have life my soul shall follow you, my ever dear Lord Marl., and wherever I am I shall only kill the time, wish for night that I may sleep, and hope the next day to hear from you.

Finally when, after his death, her hand was sought by the Duke of Somerset :

If I were young and handsome as I was, instead of old and faded as I am, and you could lay the empire of the world at my feet, you should never share the heart and hand that once belonged to John, Duke of Marlborough.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

² Coxe, i, 158.

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These are tremendous facts, lifting the relations of men and women above the human scene with all its faults and cares. They rekindle in every generous bosom the hope that things may happen here in the life of the humblest mortals which roll round the universe and win everlasting sanction

Above Time's troubled fountains
On the great Atlantic mountains,
In my golden house on high.¹

All this vexed the mind of Lord Macaulay. It marred the design of his history. It ruptured whole sets of epigrams and antitheses which had already become his literary pets. There was nothing for it but to sneer; and sneer he did, with all the resources of his nimble, sharp, unscrupulous pen.

His literary descendant, Professor Trevelyan, whose faithful, fair, and deeply informed writings are establishing a new view of these times and the men who made them, has offered the best defence in his power for the historical malversations of his great-uncle. He says (in effect) that Macaulay, with his sense of the dramatic, vilified Marlborough's early life in order by contrast to make the glories of his great period stand out more vividly. He had completed the black background, but died before he could paint upon it "the scarlet coat and flashing eye of the victor of Blenheim." We need not reject this apologia nor the confession which it implies. But what a way to write history! On this showing—the best that can be provided—Lord Macaulay stands convicted of deliberately falsifying facts and making the most revolting accusations upon evidence which he knew, and in other connexions even admitted, was worthless, for the purpose of bringing more startling contrasts and colour into his imaginative picture and of making the crowds gape at it. Macaulay's life-work lay in the region of words, and few have been finer word-spinners. Marlborough's life is only known by his deeds. The comparison is unequal, because words are easy and many, while great deeds are difficult and rare. But there is no treachery or misconduct of which Macaulay's malice

¹ Blake.

Wherever you are & when I have left my
kind shall follow you my ever Dear & I mean: &
wherever I am I shall only kiss the soil, with
the night that I may sleep, & hope the next
day to hear from you --

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has accused Marlborough in the field of action which is not equalled, were it true, by his own behaviour in this domain of history and letters over which he has sought to reign.

Mrs Manley, the French Ambassador Courtin, and other scurrilous writers have dwelt upon the enormous wealth which John had extracted from the Duchess of Cleveland. However, it was five years after he had married the girl he loved before he could buy her a house of his own. They shifted from one place to another according as his duties or employment led him. They followed the Duke or the drum. For five years Churchill kept on his bachelor lodgings in Germaine Street (Jermyn Street), five doors off St James's Street, and here they stayed during their rare visits to town. Meanwhile at first she lived at Mintern with Sir Winston and his wife, both now getting on in years and increasingly impoverished. Well may Sir Winston have said, "There is this poor roof—all that is left to us, in spite of our loyalty ; you are ever welcome here. You have been the best of sons. But how you have thrown away your chances ! Did I not, and your mother too, tell you how hard is the world, and how imprudent young people are ? Still, there is always hope. Your mother and I in our young days went through eleven years of utter poverty. Had it not been for your grandmother, Eleanor Drake, we should have starved. We cared about one another, and we came through. It may well be, although I have nothing to leave, that you two will be able to keep going. It is little enough that I and your mother can do. We will do what we can, and it may be that some day you will have enough money to have a home of your own."

It must have been a very sharp descent for the glittering blade, lover of the King's mistress, daring Colonel of England and France, and friend or rival of the highest in the land, and for the much-sought-after Sarah, to come down to the prosaic, exacting necessities of family life. However, they loved each other well enough not to worry too much about external things. This was a strange beginning for the life of a man

who “ in the bloom of youth loved lucre more than wine or women.”

It is beyond our hopes to overtake Lord Macaulay. The grandeur and sweep of his story-telling style carries him swiftly along, and with every generation he enters new fields. We can only hope that Truth will follow swiftly enough to fasten the label “ Liar ” to his genteel coat-tails.

CHAPTER IX
MASTER AND SERVANT

(1678-1679)

DANBY, humouring the King and compromising himself deeply in his service, nevertheless had pursued his own policy, and by 1678 he reached the culmination of his power. He had effected in 1677, to the immense disgust of Louis, the marriage between William of Orange and the Duke of York's elder daughter, Mary. This event, so potent in our history and in that of Europe, was to Danby only a feature in his anti-French policy. Since 1674 Holland, Prussia, the Empire, and Spain had all been ranged against Louis. Vast as were his resources, the weight of so many opponents began to tell. The appearance of England in the anti-French coalition seemed likely to turn the scale decisively against France. Charles continued to press peace and moderation on Louis, and marketed his remaining hesitations at the highest price. There is no doubt that, had the King now followed Danby's advice wholeheartedly, he could have brought an almost united nation, restored and revived by a breathing-spell, into war against France. He would have had much popular support and large supplies from Parliament. We came, in fact, to the very verge at the beginning of 1678.

During his three years in England Churchill had gained repute in the diplomatic work upon which, without losing his military status, he was increasingly employed. When the foreign crisis arose on the morrow of his marriage he was deemed equally apt for diplomacy or war. The alliance with Holland and the raising of the English Army to thirty thousand men opened important prospects in both spheres. On February 18, 1678, he was gazetted Colonel of one of the new regiments of foot. In March he was summoned from

Mintern by the Duke of York, as the following letter to Sarah explains :

I got to Town by a little after three, very weary. However I dressed and went to the Duke for to know what he had to command me. He told me that the reason that he sent for me was that he did believe that there would be occasion to send me to Holland and Flanders, and that he would have me here to be ready to go. By the French letters on Saturday, they expect to know whether we shall have peace or war ; but whatever happens I believe you may be satisfied that I shall not be in danger this year.¹

The State Papers show the character of the mission now entrusted to him. He was to act with the King's authority, and not only to settle directly with the Dutch and the Spaniards the strength of the land and sea forces to be maintained against France by the new alliance, but to arrange the military details for the co-operation of the armies and the precedence of the English and Dutch officers of the various ranks. Lastly there was the safety of four English battalions at Bruges, who were in danger through the change of policy. These were grave functions to be entrusted—upon instructions largely verbal—to a Colonel of twenty-eight. At the same time Churchill's friend, Sidney Godolphin, was sent over to manage the political side of the negotiation and to elicit from the Dutch the lowest terms on which they would conclude peace.

Churchill left England on April 5 and went first to Brussels, where he reached an agreement with the Duke of Villa Hermosa.² Thence he travelled *via* Breda to The Hague, and after meeting with some difficulties successfully negotiated a military convention with William of Orange, to whom he had been instructed to offer twenty thousand men "and guns proportionable." The hitch in the arrangements was mentioned both in a letter from Churchill to his wife and one from William to Danby.³ William wrote from The Hague on April 23/May 3, 1678 :

¹ Wolseley, i, 202-203.

² This agreement dated April 13 (O.S.) is in Add. MSS., 28937, f. 289.

³ Churchill to his wife, April 12, 1678, Brussels : "I met with some difficulties in my business with the Prince of Orange." (Wolseley, i, 204.) The convention dated April 23 (O.S.) is at Blenheim and in Add. MSS., 28397, f. 291.

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I will not tell you anything of the way in which we have arranged matters with Mr Churchill, since he will tell you about it himself. Mr Godolphin arrived yesterday evening. I am much distressed at not being able to carry out very promptly what the King desired and was so necessary.

Lord Wolseley fell into error and confusion about this convention and letter, and tells the identical story twice in two different chapters, dating it first in May and then in August, and quoting William's same letter first in French and then in English.¹ There is no doubt that Churchill concluded all his agreements in April, and then returned to England. When he next sailed for the Continent, in September, it was as a soldier.

He got on extremely well with William of Orange. No doubt he set himself to do so. They must have met frequently in 1677-78, not only on business, but in society.² They were exactly the same age. If the conversation turned on religion, they were agreed. If the aggrandizement of France became the topic, was this not the campaign in prospect? If talk ran upon the art of war, here was the profession of their lives. All the actions of the still continuing war in which they had fought, though in different theatres and on opposite sides, furnished an inexhaustible theme. Their talks may have ranged very far. We can in imagination see them poring over the map of Europe with eyes that understood so much about it. William, who was not hostile to young men, must greatly have liked to talk with his agreeable contemporary, who seemed to have the ear of every one at the English Court and had such grounding in the secrets of politics and power as was usually the privilege of princes.

The Duke of York's attitude at this time reveals the blunt, downright side of his nature, devoid of subtlety or artifice, and throws a light forward to the events of 1688. His whole outlook in religion and politics favoured an arrangement with

¹ Cf. Wolseley, i, 205, 211.

² Cf. S.P., 84/206, f. 151. The English envoy at The Hague reported that on April 19/29, 1678, Colonel Churchill arrived there with the Prince of Orange, and that the latter immediately spent three hours at the "Assembly of the States of Holland" deciding the question of whether it was to be peace or war.

France against Holland. But he had no patience with French domination. England must stand on her dignity and brook no patronage. An alliance having been made—rightly or not—with Holland, let the war proceed with vigour, as wars should always do. There must be no half-measures: one thing or the other!¹ We thus see him press his trusted agent Churchill into the centre of the business. Irritated by French obstructiveness at Nimwegen, James wrote to William of Orange in July that if the Dutch would do their part the King of England would sustain them. He and Monmouth—Catholic heir-presumptive and bastard Protestant claimant to the Crown—worked together with energy. On May 1 Churchill was appointed Brigadier of Foot with power to enlist recruits. He wrote from London to Sir Charles Lyttelton (June 12, 1678), “We are again very furious upon the war; so that I hope it will not be long before I have orders to come over.”² At last, on September 3, he received orders to proceed to Flanders in company with another Brigadier, Sir John Fenwick, who was to play a significant part in his later life. Churchill’s brigade consisted of “two battalions of guards and one battalion each of the Holland, the Duchess’ and Lord Arlington’s regiments.”³ Monmouth, with about eight thousand men drawn from the English troops in Flanders, had actually come into action in William’s attack on Saint-Denis (August 4, 1678). Charles surveyed these loyal activities with cynical amusement, and pursued his negotiations with Louis. He wanted peace; he meant peace; and in the end he secured it.

Thus we see John Churchill well established in his famous dual capacity of soldier and diplomatist, entrusted in the space of a few months with delicate and weighty negotiations, and placed at the head of the first fighting troops in the Army.

¹ *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1678, p. 91. Danby to William of Orange: “I suppose you are before now convinced how earnest the Duke of York is for the war and how he is resolved to go over with the army himself.” The conventions that Churchill concluded relating to the precedency of officers both stipulated that James should be commander-in-chief. See also James’s own letters in Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, i, 208, etc.

² *H.M.C.*, ii, 36.

³ The various commissions are at Blenheim.

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Already in 1678 he had the foretaste of what his great period was to bring him. Already he was by natural selection, as it seems, the chosen man, though not yet on the grand scale, for the vital situations of parley or arms. Now (September 3) he was to go to the front. However, he knew too many secrets to believe at this date in the continuance of the war, and his letters to Sarah show his accurate prosaic judgment of the tangled scene.

You may rest satisfied that there will be certain peace in a very few days. This news I do assure you is true ; therefore be not concerned when I tell you that I am ordered over and that to-morrow I go. You shall be sure by all opportunities to hear from me, for I do, if possible, love you better than I ever did. I believe it will be about the beginning of October before I shall get back, which time will appear an age to me, since in all that time I shall not be made happy with the sight of you. Pray write constantly to me. Send your letters as you did before to my house, and there I will take order how they shall be sent off to me. So, dearest soul of my life, farewell.

My duty to my Father and Mother and remember me to everybody else.

Tuesday night. My will I have here sent you for fear of accident.

This letter is endorsed in the Duchess's handwriting, "Lord Marlborough to ease me when I might be frightened at his going into danger."

The various treaties constituting the Peace of Nimwegen were signed during the autumn of 1678. Confronted by the coalition of more than half Europe, Louis had come off with solid advantages. He had failed in his prime and fell design of destroying the Dutch Republic, but he had absorbed and annexed Franche-Comté ; Lorraine was virtually in his hands, and by his perfidious failure to observe the terms of the treaties he remained in possession of a large part of Belgium, including many of the most important fortresses. Nevertheless, Nimwegen registered in his mind an unmistakable sense of being checked. He had secured valuable booty ; he had widely extended the boundaries of France ; but he had

felt the thrust of definite and formidable resistances to his onward career. He was dissatisfied in the midst of his triumphs, and turned a baleful eye towards the quarter from which he knew he had been thwarted. In 1668 he had recoiled from Belgium to prepare the punishment of Holland. In 1678 he recoiled from Holland to prepare the punishment of Danby. This was an easier matter.

That Minister's hour of reckoning had now come. Hostile, jealous forces had been gathering against him during his four years of power. A strange loose combination of Whigs under Shaftesbury, of Dissenters, of Catholics, and of malcontents under Arlington, was fostered by Barillon into an Opposition, and fed, like Charles, with French gold. It was found that " 'Church and King,' in the sense of exclusive Anglicanism and unfettered monarchy, had ceased to be possible, when a Protestant Church was governed by a King with a Catholic policy." ¹

Already before Nimwegen the sinister figure of Titus Oates had begun to present himself to the Council at Whitehall, weaving out of much fact and more falsehood the monstrous terror of the "Popish Plot." Danby tried for his own ends to exploit the plot against the Duke of York and thus turn the lightning from himself. It was too late. The Anglican champion became the victim of the "No Popery!" cry. All England was already agog with passion when Louis launched his thunderbolt against the Minister. Montagu was the tool. This Ambassador had fallen in with Barbara, Duchess of Cleveland, in her Paris sojourn, had at first consoled her by becoming her lover, but had later transferred his affections to her eldest daughter. The Duchess, doubly indignant, had written revengefully to Charles. Montagu, who hurried back to London to defend himself, was dismissed summarily from his office. He forthwith offered himself willingly to the bribes of Louis.² For 100,000 crowns he would expose the financial skeletons of

¹ Keith Feiling, *History of the Tory Party, 1640-1714*, p. 174.

² For various versions of the Montagu-Cleveland incident see Ormond Papers, *H.M.C.*, iv, 441-445; Bath Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 166.

the Danby Administration to Parliament. Conducted to the bar of the House of Commons by the vindictive Shaftesbury, he produced from a carefully guarded box the proofs that Danby—the patriot, Protestant, anti-French Danby, as he had been acclaimed—had all the time been responsible for taking French subsidies. There was his name upon the receipts, and the Ambassador (who had counselled the policy) was the most competent witness to denounce it.

The natural, righteous wrath of the Commons knew no bounds. All Ministerial attempts to explain or justify were drowned in furious clamour. The King proved powerless to save his Minister. Danby was impeached, dismissed from office, and hustled to the Tower. Titus Oates about this time became the hero of the hour, and there then began that awful reign of terror and hatred which for the next five years was to scorch and sear the political life of England, was to involve both Scotland and Ireland in its frenzy, was amid the shedding of much innocent blood almost to disintegrate the society and institutions of the three kingdoms, and was, above all, to render England utterly impotent abroad. Thus was Louis XIV avenged upon Danby for his policy and upon Charles for his swindles.

When Churchill returned to England after the Treaty of Nimwegen in the winter of 1678 he found grievous changes in the atmosphere of English society. Not even the Civil Wars had given rise to such vitriolic hatreds and suspicions as had now broken loose. "No kind of thing is thought of here," wrote Robert, Earl of Sunderland, "but Mr Oates and who he has accused, and who he will accuse. . . . The whole people is enraged for fear of the King[']s safety]. Everybody is in pain [alarmed for his sake] but himself."¹ As long as the prospect of war against France filled men's minds there was at least one point upon which the nation could unite. But with the disappearance of this motive the passions of parties seemed to blast and wither the whole national life. Even the faithful Cavalier Parliament was

¹ Sunderland to Henry Savile, October 31, 1678. The original letter is among the Spencer MSS.

utterly estranged. Its composition had naturally changed with time. It had already, in 1673, passed the Test Act excluding Papists from all public office. It was now proceeding with the impeachment of Danby. It had lost all confidence in the King. For eighteen years this Pensionary Parliament had served him loyally; now he and they could go no farther together. Accordingly in January 1679 this second Long Parliament was dissolved. The King was never to find so friendly a one again.

The election was fought in all the fury of the Popish Plot. Shaftesbury and the Whig leaders, who had dreaded the dissolution, found themselves fortified by its results. The new House of Commons made their one object the exclusion of James or any other Popish prince from succession to the throne. Till this should be the law they refused all supply. Many were firmly persuaded that a deep design was on foot to subvert the Protestant religion, to kill the King and crown James in his stead. A pervasive propaganda was organized that the King had really married Lucy Walter in his exile, and that her son Monmouth, "our beloved Protestant Duke," was the rightful heir to the throne. The theory was inculcated with the same vigour and had almost the same vogue as the warming-pan myth of 1688. The King stood to his main principles. He solemnly proclaimed the bastardy of Monmouth: he resisted the Exclusion Bill with uncompromising grit; but he found it expedient to send James out of the kingdom even before Parliament reassembled.

In March, therefore, the Duke of York and his household went into exile first at The Hague and then in Brussels, taking up their abode in the same house in which Charles had lived before the Restoration. Churchill, therefore, had scarcely returned to England when he had to set out again, this time upon a melancholy pilgrimage. Sarah too was fetched from Mintern with her small belongings, and joined the forlorn party. By April James was reluctantly making plans to settle in Brussels: "I fear," he told Legge,

for the longer people are used to be without me, the harder it will [be] in my mind [as I see it] to come back, and though I do

not doubt of the continuance of his Majesty's kindness to me, yet you know there are those about him who would be glad to keep me from coming back to him. . . . In the mean time it is very uneasy for me to be without coach and horses here.

A few months later he proposed to have his fox-hounds and huntsman sent over, as "I now begin to have plenty of stag-hunting and the country looks as if the fox-hunting would be very good."¹ In August Princess Anne came over to join her father. Gradually a shadow Court grew up in Brussels, of which Lady Peterborough, Lady Bellasis, and the Churchills were the mainstays. To these we must add the beautiful Frances Jennings. The reader of Grammont will remember her haughty constancy in all the temptations of Charles's Court: how she had rebuffed the Duke of York: how even the seductive monarch himself had not attained the goal: how she had been courted in vain by "Mad Dick Talbot" and had eventually married Lord Hamilton. But Lord Hamilton had fallen in battle at Ziebornstern, and Frances had now been for nearly three years a widow, fair to see. The two sisters were very happy to come together again for a space. Meanwhile the exiles were tormented by the news from home. The growth of Monmouth's popularity with the people, the violence of the Whig faction, the progress of the Exclusion Bill, filled them with dismay. Churchill was sent hot-foot on unpromising errands, now to Charles in England, now to Louis in Paris, in the interests of his unhappy master. He knew everybody and how to approach them. He was well received everywhere—as a Protestant by the Whigs, as James's agent by the Catholics—and could plead or whisper into the ear of power. He used every resource.

In August the King fell ill. Deep alarm was felt by those who saw his symptoms and knew how his excesses had worn him out. Churchill was in England at the time. Sunderland, Halifax, Godolphin, Feversham, and La K  roualle, buzzing together, all felt that James should be sent for. A demise of the Crown in James's absence meant certainly a Whig attempt

¹ For these letters see Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, 34 *seq.*

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to set Monmouth on the throne, and Churchill was sent to fetch James over. He came at once most obviously disguised. We have a spirited account by Lord Longford of his journey.

LONDON

Sept. 6, 1679

* TO LORD ARRAN

In my last I gave your Lordship an account of the surprizal we all had at the Duke's arrival on Monday night. He left Brussels in a disguise of a black perruque only and a plain stuff suit without his Star and Garter, rode post to Calais with my Lord Peterborough, Colonel Churchill, Mr Doyley and two footmen but not in their livery. He then took ship and it was so bad a sail that though he had no ill wind he was nineteen hours at sea before he landed at Dover. He went immediately to the post house where Churchill like a French officer in his scarf represented the best man in the company and being known to the post master, he [the postmaster] welcomed him, took him by the hand, said he was glad to see him, but swore by God he should be much gladder to see a better man than he and at an instant looked full in the Duke's face, when he knew it would not seem [be seemly] to take notice of him, because he saw him in disguise. Churchill was mounting upon the best horse and just as the Duke was mounting, another man who belonged to the post office went to the other side of the Duke, looked full in his face, and whispered so softly to himself that nobody could have heard him but the Duke took no notice, but rode on. These were the only persons that knew him upon the road. And yet they kept his secret. My Lord Peterborough and Doyley were outridden so that only His Highness and Churchill with one footman arrived on Monday in the evening at seven of the clock at the Barbican in Smithfield where they took a hackney coach and drove to the law office in Lombard Street, where Churchill alighted and went to see if Phil Froude was at home, but he being abroad, Churchill left a letter for him to follow him to Sir Allen Apsley's when he came home, not acquainting him that the Duke was come. At Sir Allen's the Duke supped and went to bed there, and at three in the morning took coach for Windsor, his arrival being kept secret till he was gone thither, where he arrived about seven, and came into the King's withdrawing room at the moment my Lord Sussex, who was

then in waiting in the bedchamber, opened the door ; at which the Duke entered and when he came to the King's bedside he with great submission threw himself upon his knees, asking the King's pardon for his coming into England and into his presence without his leave, saying he was so confounded at the news of His Majesty's illness that he could have no satisfaction or content in his mind till he had seen His Majesty. And since that now he had that happiness to find him past all danger (for which he blessed God) he was ready to return again that morning if it was His Majesty's pleasure ; for he came with resolutions to be absolutely governed and disposed of by His Majesty in all things. Upon this His Majesty cast his arms about him, kissed him and received him with all kindness imaginable and 'tis said by the standers-by that they both shed tears of joy at the interview.¹

The temper of the nation was such that Charles durst not keep his brother at his side. He destroyed the first Exclusion Bill by dissolving the Parliament which brought it forward ; but the election produced a House of Commons of the old hue and even sharper resolve. A new Exclusion Bill rolled through its stages, and all money was refused the Crown. The fury of the times had even destroyed the loyalty of the King's own circle ; Ministers, courtiers, and favourites—mistresses, indeed—sided with the Opposition. Louise de K  roualle, now Duchess of Portsmouth, used the most persuasive arguments of all. She had become attached to Charles, and, careless of French interests, advised him for his own good. Why should he ruin himself for this hated, unreasonable brother ? Her antagonism to James became henceforward a definite factor in the broil. Godolphin, pliable and moderate, held his office, but voted for exclusion. The King's situation was poignant. He loved his brother dearly, and in no part of his life did he show such wisdom and courage. He kept rigidly within the letter of the Constitution, but he used all the resources of law and of time with patient adroitness. He now bowed to the storm and sent James back to Brussels.

Churchill had no sooner announced his arrival with the Duke in England to his wife at Brussels than he was dispatched upon a mission to Paris. The object was to further

¹ Carte MSS., 232, f. 51.

James's design of knitting up again the arrangement with France and the renewal of subsidies which would render Charles less dependent upon Parliament and James less in jeopardy of exclusion. In the letter which Churchill bore from James he is described as "Master of my Wardrobe to whom you may give entire credit." The King approved, and Churchill's expenses (£300) were paid from the royal exchequer. Churchill was instructed to promise on behalf of James that he would in future identify himself completely with the interests of the French King, and to apologize for his master's conduct in the last two years when he had been so active in aid of William of Orange and had even permitted this arch-enemy of France to marry his own daughter Mary. The negotiation was abortive. Louis XIV refused to offer an adequate sum.¹ He saw better uses for his money in England. It was October before Churchill returned to Brussels.

But James's patience was already at an end. He refused to stay any longer in Belgium. He forthwith dispatched Churchill in advance of him to England "to get leave [for him] to go to London and thence by land to Scotland."² This was granted. At the same time, to reassure James, the King sent Monmouth out of the kingdom too. The health of the monarch was henceforth to be watched from abroad by three pairs of interested, vigilant eyes: by James from Edinburgh, and by Monmouth and William of Orange from The Hague. The far-seeing William elaborated his courtesies to both his rivals, and was eminently correct in his demeanour to Charles.

Accordingly, in October James, having kissed his daughter Mary at The Hague—as it fell out, for the last time—travelled through London by land for Edinburgh. The journey was made as if it were a progress; and the large towns and great

¹ Louis XIV to Barillon, September 21 (N.S.), 1679, from Fontainebleau by special messenger, *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 137, ff. 87-89. This letter gives the most detailed account of Churchill's mission. Other notes from the French archives are printed in Dalrymple, *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, i, 321 *seq.* For Churchill's expenses see C.S.P. (*Treasury Books*), 1679-80, pp. 216, 233, 240.

² James to Legge, October 14, 1679; Foljambe Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 139.

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houses all along the road offered dutiful hospitality. It was thirty-eight days before he reached Edinburgh, and set up his Court there with suitable celebrations. Churchill was ever at his side ; but Sarah, who was expecting a baby, had to stay behind in his lodgings in Jermyn Street. Here the beautiful Frances joined her, and the two sisters kept house together. The baby, " Harriot," was born at the end of October, and died in infancy. The young couple had had a much disturbed year and a half of married life, with no home or resting-place of any kind. They were now widely separated. Scotland was as far off in those days as Canada is now, and the journey by land or sea was incomparably toilsome and dangerous. Such are the vicissitudes which poverty imposes.

CHAPTER X

THE UNSEEN RIFT

(1679-1682)

THIS chapter is gloomy for our tale. While the French power grew and overhung Europe, the political and religious storms which raged in England from 1679 to 1683 concentrated their fury upon the Duke of York. His change of religion seemed to be the origin of the evils that had fallen upon the realm. There was impatience with individual conscientious processes which disturbed the lives of millions of people. That one man should have it in his power, even from the most respectable of motives, to involve so many others in distress and throw the whole nation into disorder, weighed heavily on the minds of responsible people. Even the most faithful servants of the King, the most convinced exponents of Divine Right, looked upon James with resentment. They saw in him the prime cause of the dangers and difficulties which his loving royal brother had to bear. There he was, a public nuisance, the Papist heir whose bigotry and obstinacy were shaking the throne. His isolation became marked; the circle about him narrowed severely. Forced into exile in Belgium and now to be marooned in Scotland, his lot was cast in dismal years. With all the strength and obstinacy of his nature he retorted scorn and anger upon his innumerable foes—the subjects he hoped to rule. The ordeal left a definite and ineffaceable imprint upon his character. He felt some of the glories of martyrdom. Henceforward he would dare all and inflict all for the faith that was in him.

It was in the household of this threatened, harassed, and indignant Prince that the first four or five years of the married life of John and Sarah were to lie. The wars had stopped, and with them for John not only pay and promotion, but all

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chance to use that military gift of which he had become conscious. He must follow a master, united to him by many ties, but a man unlovable, from whom his whole outlook and nature diverged—nay, if the truth be told, recoiled ; a master who was at times an outcast, and whose public odium his personal servants to some extent shared. Between him and that master opened the almost unbridgeable gulf which separated Protestant and Catholic. Faithful and skilful were the services which Churchill rendered to James. Many a secret or delicate negotiation with the French King or with Charles II and the Court or with English political parties was entrusted to the discreet and persuasive henchman. The invaluable character of these services and the sense of having been his patron from boyhood onwards were the bonds which held James to him. But no services, however zealous and successful, could fill the hiatus between contrary religions. The English Catholics, and above all James, their fanatical champion, and his immediate friends, were united not only by their creed, but by the comradeship which springs from being persecuted for conscience's sake. They thought thoughts and spoke a language of their own. Relations they must have with Protestants. Indeed, the Churchills formed for them indispensable contacts with the outer world. The fact that these two well-known Protestants were high in James's confidence could be paraded as a proof of the toleration of the heir to the throne. But at this time, when religion held the first place in men's minds, and when Catholics were a sect hunted and proscribed, there could be no perfect union of hearts. "They are with us," James might have exclaimed to his close, fervent necklace of priests and co-religionists, "with us, and serviceable; but, alas, not of us." And so it continued to the end.

However, the joys and responsibilities of the early years of married life redeemed for John and Sarah their harsh, anxious, and disturbed surroundings. They had in their family life an inner circle of their own, against which the difficulties of the Duke's household and the nation-wide hostility with which that household was regarded, might beat in vain. We must

record their trapesings to and fro as the fortunes of their master ebbed and flowed.

There are a few letters from John on the northern road or in Scotland to Sarah in Jernyn Street.¹

* You may guess by yourself how uneasy I have been since I left you, for nothing breathing ever loved another so well as I do you, and I do swear to you as long as I live I will never love another; and if you do ever love me, I will always love you. I have spoke to Mr Frowde so that you have but to send your letters to him, and he will always send them safe to me. After I saw you my Lady Sunderland spoke to me herself, and told me that she took it very unkindly that I had not left you in her care, but however she said she would take care of you in spite of me. Therefore pray when you see her be very civil to her, for as things now stand it is very fit you should be well with her. Mr Legge leaves us this night so that then I will write to you again; till when, my soul's soul, farewell.

STILTON

Monday night [November 2, 1679?]

* You will see by this that I am got safe to this place, and to morrow night I intend to lie at Doncaster. I am a great deal wearier in riding this day than I ever was when I have ridden twice as far; if I continue so to-morrow, I shall hardly get to Scotland on Saturday, but sooner I promise you I will not, for all that I pretend to, is to be at Berwick on Friday night. You will be sure to hear from me as soon as I get to my journey's end, and pray believe that I love nobody in the world but yourself, and I do assure you I do at this present with all my heart wish we were together. Therefore pray be ready to come away as soon as you may, for if I should not come back, I would beg hard you would come away the day after you know it, and I do assure you, you shall be extreme welcome to me.

Pray kiss the child once for me.

EDINBURGH

Jan. 15, 1680

I have received yours of the 10th with a copy of the letter you writ to my Mother, which if she takes anything ill that is in that

¹ Those letters marked with an asterisk have not been previously published. The others are in Wolseley, chapter xxix.

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letter, you must attribute it to the peevishness of old age, for really there is nothing in it that she ought to take ill. I take it very kindly that you have writ to her again, for she is my Mother, and I hope at last that she will be sensible that she is to blame in being peevish. I long extremely to have this month over so that I may be leaving this country, which is very uneasy since you were not in it, for I do assure you that my thoughts are so fond of you that I cannot be happy when I am from you, for I love you so well that you cannot yourself wish to be loved better.

He adds this message for Frances :

Pray present my services to the widow and tell her that I am very glad she is not married, and if she stays for my consent she never will be.

Frances did not take his advice, and “mad Dick Talbot,” afterwards Duke of Tyrconnel and James’s viceroy in Ireland, renewed the suit he had pressed so ardently six years before. This time he was successful. Thus the delectable Frances was caught up in the Catholic-Jacobite world, and after 1688 consumed her life in exile.

January 17th, 1680

I do with all my soul wish myself with you ; and now that I am from you I do assure you that I have no satisfaction but that of receiving yours and writing to you, and flattering myself that it will not now be long before I shall be truly happy in being with you again. You are so well beloved by me that if that will make you happy, you ought to be the happiest woman living, for none is so well beloved as you are by me. I hope by the first post of next month to send you word what day I shall leave this country, which is very much desired by me—not for any dislike to the country, but from the great desire I have to be with you, for you are dearer to me than ever you were in your life.

He adds quaintly, “My sarvice to Hariote,” who was at that time about ten weeks old.

And a few days later :

Although I believe you love me, yet you do not love so well as I, so that you cannot be truly sensible how much I desire to

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be with you. I swear to you the first night in which I was blessed in having you in my arms was not more earnestly wished for by me than now I do to be again with you, for if ever man loved woman truly well, I now do you, for I swear to you were we not married I would beg you on my knees to be my wife, which I could not do did I not esteem you as well as I love you.

If you please my service to your sister.

His earnest wish was to return from Scotland to England to see his wife and baby.

EDINBURGH

Jan. 29, 1680

* [I have received] yours of the 22nd. and also this to-day of the 24th. both doubting that I will leave this place the beginning of next month as I promised you, but before now I do not doubt but that you are satisfied I shall, for in my last I wrote to you to write no more. . . . London and Edinburgh are [not the?] same, for you [one] may find pleasure in being abroad at London, but it is not the same here, so that I will never send you that excuse for my not writing. About an hour after I had written to you last post night, I was taken ill of my old fits, and last night I had another of them so that for this two days I have had very violent headachings as ever I had in my life ; I have this day taken physic so that I think I am better but . . . [torn] which makes me melancholy, for I love you so well that I cannot think with patience of dying, for then we must part for ever, which is a dreadful thing to me that loves you above all expression. The doctor is come in and will let me write no more, for he says it is the worst thing I can do. So, my All, farewell.

John's hopes of coming south were not ill-founded, for on the very day this last letter was written Charles sent a welcome command to his brother to return. James lost no time in taking leave of his Scottish Government, and at the end of February transported himself and his household in the royal yachts from Leith to Deptford.

Churchill on the eve of the voyage begged his wife to

pray for fair winds, so that we may not stay here, nor be long at sea, for should we be long at sea, and very sick, I am afraid it would do me great hurt, for really I am not well, for in my whole

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lifetime I never had so long a fit of headaching as now : I hope all the red spots of the child will be gone against I see her, and her nose straight, so that I may fancy it be like the Mother, for as she has your coloured hair, so I would have her be like you in all things else.

The family were united in Jermyn Street in the beginning of March, and John saw his child for the first time. We do not know how long the infant lived. It may well be that the sorrow of her death came upon them almost as soon as they were together again.

James spent the summer of 1680 in England, and hoped, with the King, that the new Parliament summoned for October might be more tolerant to him. It is plain that in this interval Churchill was most anxious to secure some employment which would give him and his family a secure habitation. The command of one of the permanent regiments like the Admiralty Regiment, the governorship of Sheerness, or a foreign embassy were posts to which he might reasonably aspire. James was pleased with his services and made every effort to promote his interests, subject to one fatal condition. "So long as I am from him [Charles II]," he wrote to Hyde in December 1680,¹ "I would not willingly have Churchill from me." When James's hopes were high he tried to find an appointment for his servant, and when they fell he could not spare him.

Thus in the summer of 1680 James favoured Churchill's fitness to be Ambassador either to France or to Holland. In the latter case he was warmly seconded by William. Barillon's account of May 20, 1680, may serve.

Mr Sidney [the English Minister at The Hague] will come home soon. It is believed he will not return and I am told that Mr Churchill [*le sieur Chercheil*] may well succeed him. If this is done, it will be to satisfy the Duke of York and to reassure him on all possible negotiations with the Prince of Orange. He [James] distrusts Mr Sidney, and has hated him for a long time. Mr Churchill on the contrary has the entire confidence of his master, as your Majesty could see when he had the honour

¹ Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, i 51.

of presenting himself to you last year. He is not a man who has any experience of affairs. It is also said that the Prince of Orange has declared that there should be no other Ambassador of England in Holland but him, and that it is only necessary to send docile personages who let themselves be led.¹

The talk about the Paris embassy gave offence to its occupant, Henry Savile, who wrote in protest to his brother, Lord Halifax :

I am told that Mr Churchill likes my station so well that he has a mind to it, and got his master to work for him, and by very cunning artifice endeavours to make my friends willing to have me recalled upon pretext I live too high and shall ruin myself.

Halifax, who had already formed a firm and lasting friendship with John, wrote back at once saying, "Churchill, whatever inclination he may have to be minister, will never give such a price for it as the supplanting of a friend." Savile, reassured, explained to Halifax that he had now found out that the report had arisen from a remark of the Duke of York "which was improved into a story round the town."²

But all these hopes and projects, real or shadowy, came to naught. The new Parliament was fiercer than its predecessor. Shaftesbury was at the head of a flaming Opposition. A fresh Exclusion Bill advanced by leaps and bounds. The ferocity of the Whigs knew no limit, and their turpitude lay not far behind. Their cause was the cause of England, and is the dominant theme of this tale. Their conduct was sullied by corruption and double-dealing unusual even in that age. Their leaders without exception all took for either personal or party purposes French gold, while they shouted against Papist intrigues and denounced all arrangements with France. Upon this squalid scene Louis XIV gloated with cynical eyes. His agent Barillon, presiding over the dizzy whirlpools of Westminster and Whitehall, bribed both sides judiciously to maintain the faction fight. Many illustrious names, Whig and Tory, figure impartially on his pay-rolls. Lady Harvey joined her brother Montagu, the treacherous

¹ Barillon to Louis XIV, May 20, 1680, R.O. Transcripts.

² *Savile Correspondence* (Camden Society), pp. 124, 128-129.

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ex-Ambassador, upon them. Lord Holles, Hampden, the son of a famous father, and the Duke of Buckingham pocketed each a thousand guineas. Algernon Sidney, soon to give his life, took a solatium of five hundred guineas. The mood was that, if the King and his Ministers and courtiers could get gold out of France for their Popish leanings, why should not the honest Protestant Opposition have their share of the mischief-money too? Thus Louis stoked the fires which burned away the English strength.

One name is conspicuous in its absence from these lists of shame—Churchill's. Yet how glad Barillon would have been to have slipped a thousand guineas into the palm of this needy Colonel and struggling family man! The artful Ambassador, as we see by his correspondence, was no friend to John. Any tittle of spiteful gossip or depreciatory opinion which he could gather he sedulously reported. Churchill, this influential, ubiquitous go-between, the Protestant agent of the Duke of York, was well worth tainting, even if he could not be squared. Sarah long afterwards wrote, "The Duke of Marlborough never took a bribe." Think how these lists have been scanned by the eyes of Marlborough's detractors. See how every scrap of fouling evidence has been paraded and exploited. Yet nothing has been found to challenge Sarah's assertion.

The approaching assembly of this hostile Parliament was sufficient to force the King again to expatriate the brother of whom he was so fond. The Duke, desperate, asked Churchill to fetch Barillon to him, and begged the Ambassador to procure from Louis the funds which would obviate recourse to the dreaded House of Commons. James was obstinately determined not to be banished from London a third time. It took the combined efforts of the King and the two Secretaries of State, Sunderland and Jenkins, aided by Halifax and Essex, to persuade him.¹ The pressures were extreme. On October 20 James and his household most reluctantly again set out by sea for Edinburgh. This time both the Churchills could go together. They endured a

¹ Dalrymple, i, Part I, 344 *seq.*

rough voyage of five days. James was received in Scotland with due ceremony ; but the famous cannon known as ' Mons Meg ' burst in firing its salute, and many were the superstitious head-waggings which followed the occurrence. This time James seriously undertook the government of Scotland, and set his seal upon a melancholy epoch.

Scotland was at once the origin and the end of the Stuarts. No feature of Charles II's reign is more lamentable than the government of his northern kingdom. The Duke of Lauderdale, the ablest, the most wicked, and the sole survivor in office of the Cabal, was its mainspring for nearly twenty years. He had married Lady Dysart, a woman of appalling greed, whom Burnet describes as "ravenously covetous" and as one "who would have stuck at nothing by which she might compass her ends."¹ He was himself a former Covenanter, probably a freethinker, and exploited and applied all the local feuds and fanaticisms with callous craft. Nationalism at this time in Scotland stood not upon a political basis, as in England, but upon the Kirk. The Reformation in Scotland had meant a period of violent mob-law and a revolutionary break with the past. Cold, sour, unchanging hatreds divided the Scottish race. Lauderdale used the quarrel between the Lowlands and the Highlands and the religious rifts to make a balance by which the King's authority could stand. Cromwell had given Scotland Parliamentary union with England. A freer trade had flourished across the Border, and domestic peace reigned upon the overthrow of Presbyterian dominance. Under King Charles the Parliamentary union was dissolved, and hostile tariffs froze the streams of trade and wealth. Lauderdale held the country down. He extracted good revenues for the Crown, maintained a trustworthy standing army, and broke up by ruthless methods the fervent resistance of the Covenanters. Archbishop Sharp was brutally murdered in revenge on Magus Muir. A fierce rebellion in 1679 had been skilfully and temperately suppressed by Monmouth. Terror and counter-terror grew together.

¹ *History of My Own Time*, i, 437.

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It was over this scene that James now began actively to preside. On his first visit to Scotland his rule had seemed a mitigation of the severities of Lauderdale.¹ "I live there," he wrote, "as cautiously as I can, and am very careful to give offence to none." But now, between 1680 and 1682, embittered by ill-usage, emboldened by anger, his thoroughgoing temperament led him to support the strongest assertions of authority. When, in June 1681, Churchill brought him from London his patent as Royal Commissioner he decided to make use of the Scottish Parliament to obtain an emphatic and untrammelled assertion of his right of succession. He summoned the first Parliament held in Scotland since 1673. He set himself to demonstrate here on a minor scale the policy which he thought his brother should follow in England. He passed through the Parliament of 1681 an anti-Exclusion Bill. He developed with care the anti-national Scottish army. He used the wild Highlanders, the only Catholics available, to suppress the contumacy of the Lowlanders. The torture of the boot was inflicted freely upon Covenanters and persons of obstinate religious opinions. On these occasions most of the high personages upon the Privy Council would make some excuse to leave the room. But accusing pens allege that the Duke of York was always at his post. Dark and hateful days for Scotland!

Churchill's closest friend in James's circle at this time was George Legge. He was a faithful man with a fine record as a sea-captain in all the wars with the Dutch. He had long been in the Duke of York's service as Groom, and later Gentleman of his Bedchamber and his Master of the Horse. He had been Lieutenant-Governor of Portsmouth for some years, and in January 1681 was appointed Master-General of the Ordnance. The Duke, whose relations with him were almost those of father and son, tried his best to secure him the enjoyment of both offices. In the end Legge was obliged to "part with Portsmouth." He was related to Churchill on his mother's side by that same strain of Villiers blood of which mention has been made. He ranked far

¹ Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, ii, 292-293.

higher in favour than Churchill, who must have greatly desired the comfortable office of the Ordnance. However, John wrote him a handsome and characteristic letter upon his appointment :

I see by yours to the Duke that came this day that you are now Master of the Ordnance. I do not doubt but you are satisfied that I am glád of it, and I do assure you that I wish that you may live long to enjoy it, and as I wish you as well as any friend you have, so I will take the liberty to tell you that you will not be just to your family if you do not now order your affairs so as that you may by living within yourself be able in time to clear your estates. I will say no more on this subject at present but when we meet you must expect me to be troublesome if I find you prefer your own living before your children's good.¹

He signs himself "your affectionate kinsman and faithful friend and servant." We shall follow Legge's tragic fortunes as Lord Dartmouth later.

Churchill, apart from his aversion from cruelties of all kinds, was now placed in a most difficult and delicate position. James relied on him to make every effort to secure his return to Court, and to support his claims against Monmouth and the Exclusionists ; while, on the other hand, Churchill's powerful friends in London, Sunderland, Halifax, Godolphin, and Hyde, told him to keep James in Scotland at all costs. On December 22, 1680, Sunderland wrote to him, "I must join with [Hyde] in desiring you to help in persuading the Duke that whatever appears ungrateful to him in these letters is intended the kindest by the King."² Yet a month later (January 22, 1681) Churchill arrived in London on a confidential mission from James to press the King not to allow Parliament to sit, and to enter into an alliance with France and thus obtain his return.³ Amid these conflicting currents no man was more capable of steering a shrewd and sensible course. He carried out his instructions from James with proper diligence and discretion ; but, on the other hand, his

¹ January 5, 1681. Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, Appendix V, 55-56.

² Sunderland to Churchill, Blenheim MSS.

³ Clarke, *James II*, pp. 659-660.

THE UNSEEN RIFT

cautious temper prevented the wilder threats of his master (about raising the Scots or the Irish in his own defence) from being "attended with consequences"; for he "frankly owned" to the French Ambassador that James "was not in a condition to maintain himself in Scotland, if the King his brother did not support him there."¹

In Scotland James's only possible opponent was the somewhat lackadaisical ninth Earl of Argyll.² "The Duke of York," wrote Burnet, "seeing how great a man the Earl of Argyll was, concluded it was necessary either to gain him or to ruin him." He first tried vainly to convert him by asking him to "exchange the worst of religions for the best." When Parliament met, Argyll opposed a clause in the Scottish Test Act exempting members of the royal household from the Protestant Oath of Allegiance. This angered James, and immediately on the adjournment of Parliament schemes hostile to the Earl were revived in a new form. It was proposed to apply to the King for the appointment of a commission to review his rights, deprive him of his heritable offices, and impose upon his property the debts which had been alleged against it. Argyll left Edinburgh to obtain the documents which confirmed him in his offices, and on his return interviewed James after supper in his bedroom at Holyrood to protest against his dismissal from one of his posts in his absence. If, Argyll said, this were "to express a frown, it is the first I have had from His Majesty these thirty years. I know I have enemies, but they shall never make me alter my duty and resolution to serve His Majesty. . . ."

The Churchills were in no sort of agreement with their patron in his Scottish courses, and it is clear that they regarded both the policy and its author with increasing repugnance. The old Duchess nearly three generations later in her comments on Lediard's history writes :

* All the account that is given in this History of the Duke's arbitrary Proceedings in Scotland was true ; for I saw it myself, and was much grieved at the Trials of several People that were

¹ Dalrymple, i, Part I, 344.

² The following account is based mainly upon J. Willcock's *Life of Argyll* (1907).

hang'd for no Reason in the World, but because they would not disown what they had said, that King Charles the Second had broke his Covenant. I have cried at some of these Trials, to see the Cruelty that was done to these Men only for their choosing to die rather than tell a Lye. How happy would this Country be if we had more of those Sort of Men! I remember the Duke of Marlborough was mightily grieved one Day at a Conversation he had heard between the Earl of Argyle (who was beheaded afterwards for explaining the Test in saying he took it in such a Sense as was agreable to his duty to God and the King) and the Duke of York. The Duke of Marlborough told me he never heard a man speak more Reason than he did to the Duke [of York] and after he had said what he at first resolved, the Duke would never make Answer to any Thing, But You shall excuse me, my Lord, You shall excuse me My Lord; And so continued for a long Time whatever he said without answering otherwise. Another thing I remember the Duke of Marlborough told me when we were in Scotland, there came a Letter from Lewis the Grand to the Duke of York, writ by himself; which put all the Family into a great Disorder; For no body could read it. But it was enough to shew there was a strict [secret] Correspondence between the Duke and the King of France. All these things the Duke of Marlborough told me with great Grief; But it was not at all in his Power to help any of them.¹

We may make all allowances for the bias of this statement, but it certainly reveals the breach which had opened. The Duchess was eighty, but an old person's memory generally recalls faithfully the impressions of youth, while it often fails to record the events of later life.

In August 1681 the Duke of York's affairs in England were going from bad to worse, and the King was in desperate grapple with his brother's pursuers. An intense effort was concerted to persuade James to conform at least in outward semblance to the religion of his future subjects. His appeals to be recalled to England were made use of against him. The King offered to allow him to return if he would but come to church. After all, had he not consented to be present during the prayers of the Scottish Parliament? Surely what all his

¹ Letter of October 6, 1744, in Spencer MSS.

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well-wishers now asked was but an extension of that wise concession to political exigencies of the first order. Halifax, strong in the prestige of having destroyed the first Exclusion Bill, used hard words. Unless, he declared, the Duke complied, "his friends would be obliged to leave him like a garrison one could no longer defend." Every one could see what a simplification his assent would make ; and what a boon to all ! His first wife's brother, Laurence Hyde, afterwards Earl of Rochester, was entrusted with the difficult task of his conversion to conformity, upon which the strongest family, social, and State pressures were engaged. Hyde, Churchill, and Legge were James's three most intimate personal servants. They had been with him for many years. His partiality for them had long been proved. Legge was absent, but we cannot doubt that Churchill supported Hyde with any influence he could command. Nothing availed. James was advised by his confessor that there could be no paltering with heresy. Such advice was decisive.

This incident deserves prominence because it evoked from Churchill one of those very rare disclosures of his political-religious convictions in this period which survive. He wrote to Legge the following letter :

Sept. 12, 1681, *Berwick*

DEAR COUSIN,

I should make you both excuses and compliments for the trouble you have been at in sending my wife to me, but I hope it is not that time of day between you and I, for without compliment as long as I live I will be your friend and servant. My Lord Hyde, who is the best man living, will give you an account of all that has passed. You will find that nothing is done in what was so much desired, *so that sooner or later we must be all undone.*¹ As soon as Lewen has his papers the Duke would have [wish to] take the first opportunity by sea and come from Scotland. My heart is very full, so that should I write to you of the sad prospect I fear we have, I should tire your patience ; therefore I refer myself wholly to my Lord Hyde and assure you that wherever I am, you and my Lord Hyde have a faithful servant of [in] me.²

¹ Author's italics.

² Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, Appendix V, 67-68.

This letter, written so secretly to his intimate friend and kinsman seven years before the revolution of 1688, must not be forgotten in the unfolding of our story.

On December 12, 1681, Argyll was brought to trial for treason for explaining that he took the Oath of Allegiance "as far as it was consistent with the Protestant religion," and "not repugnant to it or his loyalty." By the exertions of James he was condemned to death. On the eve of his execution he escaped by a romantic artifice and for a time lay hidden in London. When the news of his refuge was brought to the King by officious spies, the tolerant Charles brushed them away with the remark, "Pooh, pooh, a hunted partridge!" His brother had a different outlook.

Churchill had deplored Argyll's sentence. He wrote to Sir John Werden, the Duke of York's secretary, and told him he hoped on account of their old friendship that Argyll would receive no punishment; and he wrote to George Legge that he trusted Argyll's escape from prison would be looked on as a thing of no great consequence.¹

The author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* relates that when in Scotland Churchill had "preserved from ruin and destruction several poor people whose scruples of conscience rendered them obnoxious to the laws then in force." We have therefore not only Sarah's octogenarian recollections, but Churchill's conversation with Barillon, the reliance that Sunderland put on him to moderate James, and Churchill's clear dislike of the treatment of Argyll. All these are trustworthy proofs of the growth of honest, grievous differences in political temper and outlook between James and his trusted servant.

The leaders of Scottish society were not men of half-measures. Affronted to the core by the ill-usage of their country as it continued year after year, they devoted their

¹ Churchill's letter to Werden does not survive, but the reply (Blenheim MSS.) proves its tenour. He wrote on December 22, 1681, to Churchill, "Your's of the 13th is ye freshest yt I have had from you; & by others service [?] I find ye Issue to the Ea. of Argille's Tryall such as was expected; & now (in regard to Yr old friendship, which you put me in Mind of) I hope he will have the Kings Pardon, & ye Effects of His Bounty, & hereafter in some Measure deserve both." See also Churchill to Legge, January 5, 1682, Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, pp. 55-56 (wrongly dated 1681).

lives to practical schemes of vengeance, and they turned resolutely to the Prince of Orange. The flower of the Scottish nobility emigrated to Holland with deep, bitter intent to return sword in hand. All became unrelenting enemies of the House of Stuart. In the revolution of 1688 Lowland Scotland swung to William as one man.

In 1682 Churchill was able to render a service to his patron of which James was profoundly sensible. The Duchess of Portsmouth was anxious about her future financial position. She sought £5000 a year secured upon the almost unimpeachable revenues of the Post Office. She pressed Charles hard upon the point. But all the revenues of the Post Office had been granted to the Duke of York for life, and the Duke was then still an impatient exile in Scotland. Churchill spent as much time and trouble upon the bargain that James should cede to "Madame Carwell" her £5000 from the Post Office, in exchange for his being allowed to return home, as in later years upon the combinations of the Grand Alliance or the strategy of the world war. In the first instance James was allowed to come to London to take part in the negotiations. Although these fell through because an Act of Parliament was required to alienate the Post Office revenues, fraternal contacts were re-established. At this time, as the next chapter will explain, the King felt his power returning to him. He was, moreover, anxious to gratify Louis XIV by restoring his Papist brother to his place at Court. The long-sought permission was granted. James, with a considerable retinue of nobles and servants, embarked in the frigate *Gloucester* on May 4, 1682, to wind up his affairs in Scotland and bring his household home.

The catastrophe which followed very nearly brought this and many important tales to an end. But another revealing beam of light is thrown by it upon Churchill's attitude towards his master. The royal vessel was accompanied by a small squadron and several yachts, on one of which was Samuel Pepys himself. Two days out the *Gloucester* grounded in the night upon a dangerous sandbank three miles off Cromer, on the Norfolk coast, known as the 'Lemon and

Ore.’¹ After about an hour she slipped off the bank and foundered almost immediately in deep water. Although the sea was calm and several ships lay in close company, scarcely forty were saved out of the three hundred souls on board.

Numerous detailed and incompatible accounts of this disaster from its survivors and spectators have been given. Some extol the Duke of York’s composure, his seamanship, his resolute efforts to save the vessel, and the discipline and devotion of the sailors, who, though about to drown, cheered as they watched him row away. Others dwell on the needless and fatal delays in abandoning the ship, on the confusion which prevailed, on the ugly rushes made for the only available boat, and finally portray James going off with his priests, his dogs, and a handful of close personal friends in the long-boat, which “might well have held fifty,” leaving the rest to perish miserably. Catholic and Tory writers, naturally enough, incline to the former version, and Protestants and Whigs to the latter. We have no concern with the merits of the controversy. What is important is Churchill’s view of it. He, like Legge, was one of the favoured few invited into the boat by James, and to that he owed his life. One would therefore have expected that he would instinctively have taken the side of his master and, in a sense, rescuer, and would have judged his actions by the most lenient standards. Instead, he appears to have been the sternest critic. Sixty years later Sarah, in her illuminating comments on Lediard’s history, writes as follows :

* Since my last account of Mr Lediard’s Book, I have read the account of the shipwreck of the *Gloucester* (page 40). The Truth of which I had as soon as the Duke [of Marlborough] came to Scotland from his own Mouth : (for I was there) who blamed the Duke [of York] to me excessively for his Obstinacy and Cruelty. For if he would have been persuaded to go off himself at first, when it was certain the Ship could not be saved, the Duke of Marlborough was of the Opinion that there would not have been a Man lost. For tho’ there was not Boats enough to carry them all away, all those he mentions that were drowned were lost by the Duke’s obstinacy in not coming away sooner ;

¹ In many histories these two shoals—the Lemon and Ower—are described as lying “off the Humber.” They are actually thirty miles to the south of it.

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And that was occasioned by a false courage to make it appear, as he thought he had what he had not ; By which he was the occasion of losing so many Lives. But when his own was in danger, and there was no hope of saving any but those that were with Him, he gave the Duke of Marlborough his Sword to hinder Numbers of People that to save their own Lives would have jumped into the Boat, notwithstanding his Royal Highness was there, that would have sunk it. This was done, and the Duke went off safe ; and all the rest in the Ship were lost, as Mr Lediard gives an account, except my Lord Griffin, who had served the Duke long, who, when the Ship was sinking, threw himself out of a Window, and saved himself by catching hold of a Hen Coop. . . . All that Lediard relates to filling the boat with the priests and the dogs is true. But I don't know who else went in the boat, or whether they were of the same religion.¹

There can be no doubt that this is the real story which John told Sarah in the deepest secrecy as soon as he and the other woebegone survivors from the shipwreck arrived in Edinburgh. That no inkling of his servant's opinion ever came to James seems almost certain. We, however, in this after-light can see quite plainly where the Churchills stood in relation to James. It is not merely want of sympathy, but deep disapproval. They served him because it was their duty and their livelihood. He retained them because better servants could not be found elsewhere. But all this lay far below the surface. The whole ducal household arrived at Whitehall, for good or ill, in the summer of 1682, and Churchill was rewarded on December 21, 1682, for his patient, astute diplomacy and invaluable services of the past three years with the barony of Churchill of Aymouth, in the peerage of Scotland,² and the command of the second troop of the Life Guards.

¹ Spencer MSS.

² Wolseley misdates this 1683. The patent is at Blenheim.

CHAPTER XI
THE PRINCESS ANNE

(1679-1685)

FEW stories in our history are more politically instructive than the five years' pitiless duel between King Charles II and his ex-Minister Shaftesbury. The opposing forces were diversely composed, yet, as it proved, evenly balanced; the ground was varied and uncertain; the conditions of the combat were peculiarly English, the changes of fortune swift and unforeseeable, the issues profound and the stakes mortal. For the first three years Shaftesbury seemed to march with growing violence from strength to strength. Three separate Parliaments declared themselves with ever-rising spirit for his cause. London, its wealth, its magistrates, its juries, and its mob, were resolute behind him. Far and wide throughout the counties and towns of England the fear of "Popery and Slavery" dominated all other feelings and united under the leadership of the great Whig nobles almost all the sects and factions of the Centre and of the Left, as they had never been united even at the height of the Great Rebellion. Thus sustained, Shaftesbury set no limits to his aims or conduct. He exploited to the last ounce alike the treacheries of Montagu and the perjuries of Oates. He watched with ruthless eye a succession of innocent men, culminating in Lord Stafford, sent to their deaths on the scaffold or at Tyburn upon false testimony. He held high parley with the King, as if from power to power, demanded the handing over of Portsmouth and Hull to officers approved by Parliament, indicted the Duke of York before a London Grand Jury as a Popish recusant, threatened articles of impeachment against the Queen, and made every preparation in his power for an eventual resort to arms. This was the same Shaftesbury who, as a Minister in the Cabal, had acquiesced only four years

THE PRINCESS ANNE

before in the general policy of the Secret Treaty of Dover, and only two years before had been a party to the Declaration of Indulgence and the acceptance of subsidies from France.

The King, on the other hand, seemed during the first three years to be almost defenceless. His weakness was visible to all. He was forced to leave Danby, his faithful agent, for whose actions he had assumed all possible responsibility, whom he had covered with his royal pardon, to languish for five years in the Tower. He dared not disown the suborned or perjured Crown witnesses brought forward in his name to prove a Popish plot, nor shield with his prerogative of mercy their doomed victims. He had to suffer the humiliation of banishing his brother and the insult of hearing his Queen accused of plotting his murder. He had to submit to, or perhaps even connive at his beloved son Monmouth joining the leaders of his foes.

All the while he lay in his voluptuous, glittering Court, with his expensive mistresses and anxious courtiers, dependent upon the dear-bought gold of France. And meanwhile behind the wrathful proceedings of justly offended faction-fanned Parliaments, Puritan England was scandalized, Cromwellians who had charged at Marston Moor or Naseby prayed that old days might come again, and the common people were taught to believe that the Great Plague and Fire had fallen upon the land as God's punishment for the wickedness of its ruler. Vulnerable in the last degree, conscious of his peril, and yet superb in patient courage, the profound, imperturbable, and crafty politician who wore the challenged crown endured the fury of the storm and awaited its climax. And in the end triumph! Triumph in a completeness and suddenness which seemed incredible to friends and enemies alike.

This was a civil war whose battles and sieges, whose stratagems and onfalls, were represented by State trials, constitutional deadlocks, and Parliamentary or municipal manœuvres. It was a war of and for public opinion, and as bitter and ferocious as many waged in the open field. Its events were the birth-throes of party government, whose

sire was the Popish, and whose dam the Rye House, Plot. There had been *sides* in the Great Rebellion; henceforward there would be *parties*, less picturesque, but no less fierce. The three General Elections in succession required and evolved all those organizations—clubs, colours, and slogans—with which in later and gentler ages we are only too familiar. The mutual hatreds and injuries of the Whigs and Tories engraved their rival symbols for two hundred years on English life. In vain was Marlborough at the head of victorious armies to accuse “the detested names of Whig and Tory”; in vain would Chatham pronounce his majestic invocation, “Be one people!” The metals which were now molten were cast in moulds destined to decide the character and practical working of Parliamentary institutions not only in our island, but in every country where and while they have thrived.

The turning-point of the conflict was the King’s sudden dissolution of the Parliament of 1680. After the third election both Houses were convened at Oxford in March 1681, to avoid the violent pressures which the citizens, apprentices, and the mass of London could exert. To this Parliament, the last of the reign, both factions resorted in the temper of civil war. It was “like a Polish Diet.” The Whig chiefs arrived surrounded by their armed retainers, who eyed the King’s guards with open menace. The new House of Commons seemed only to be set with more zealous purpose upon excluding James from the throne. Shaftesbury, after the Royal Speech, handed the King what was virtually an ultimatum in favour of the succession of Monmouth. “My lord, as I grow older I grow more steadfast,” replied the King. Confronted with the attitude of the assembly, and finding that Oxford was a camp of armed bands whom a word might set at each other’s throats, Charles proclaimed the dissolution, and lost no time in withdrawing under strong escort to Windsor. Shaftesbury made a resolute bid to keep both Houses in illegal session. But the sense of their corporate function had passed from the minds of the individual members. They who had seemed resolute to undertake all fell to pieces “as



THE FIRST EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

Sir Peter Lely

By permission of the Earl of Shaftesbury

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if a gust of wind had suddenly scattered all the leaves from a tree.”¹

Stripped of their Parliamentary engines, the Whigs turned to conspiracy, and beneath conspiracy grew murder. Their declared purpose to exclude James from the succession broadened among many into naked republicanism. “Any design but a commonwealth,” said Shaftesbury to Lord Howard, “would not go down with my supporters now.”² There can be no doubt that schemes and even preparations for an armed national rising were afoot; nor that some of the greatest Parliamentary personages were active in them. Behind the machinations of the famous Whig leaders darker and even more violent forces stirred. Rumbold and other grim Cromwellian figures stalked the streets of London. A design to assassinate the King and the Duke where the road from Newmarket passed Rumbold’s home, the Rye House, was discussed, and to some extent concerted, by a group of plotters in a London tavern. But while these projects, general and particular, germinated in the soil, the mood of the nation gradually but decisively changed; its anti-Catholic rage had exhausted itself in the shedding of innocent blood, and public sympathy gradually turned to the sufferers and against their loud-mouthed, hard-swearing, vainglorious, implacable pursuers.

Presently the King felt strong enough to prosecute Shaftesbury for high treason, and when the Grand Jury of Middlesex, elected by the City—“that republic by the King’s side”—threw out the Bill, he turned his attention to the processes by which the London sheriffs were chosen. By a prolonged and elaborate series of political manœuvres, and with the assistance of a friendly Lord Mayor, Tory sheriffs were declared elected, and juries ardent for the Crown became available. Shaftesbury, as soon as he found himself undermined by such appointments, and perhaps alarmed by the whispers of murder plottings which reached his ears, fled to Holland, and died almost immediately in exile. The disclosure of the Rye House

¹ Ranke, *History of England*, iv, 135.

² James Ferguson, *Robert Ferguson the Plotter*, p. 72.

Plot, coming on so favourable a tide, aroused a volume of sympathy for the King which in its force and passion became almost a counterpart of the fears and angers created by the Popish Plot. From all parts of the country loyal addresses began to pour in. Many nobles and country gentlemen who had for long avoided the Court presented themselves dutifully at Whitehall. One by one the Rye House plotters, and even those who had been present when they plotted, were sent by the tribunals to the scaffold. Writs of *Quo warranto* impugned the authority of municipal corporations. In the blast of popular disapproval, and without any Parliament to focus their cause, the power of the Whigs collapsed and was for a time destroyed. The Tory reaction, blowing as savagely as the Whig aggressions that had called it forth, exacted innocent blood in its turn. Shaftesbury was already gone. Howard turned King's evidence. Russell and Algernon Sidney died on the scaffold, and Essex escaped it only by suicide in the Tower. These deaths were but the vicarious expiation of the shameful executions of the Popish Plot.

By 1683 the King was as safe on his throne as on the morrow of his coronation, nearly a quarter of a century before. He had come through an ordeal which few British sovereigns, certainly neither his father nor his brother, could have survived. For all his cynicism and apparent indolence and levity he had preserved the hereditary principle of the monarchy and its prerogative inviolate. He had successfully defended his brother's right to the throne ; he had championed the honour of his Queen ; he had obtained a more complete control of the national and municipal organs of government and of the judiciary than had existed since the days of his grandfather. He had never lost the support of the Episcopacy. He was poor, he was a pensioner of France, he was powerless on the Continent ; but as long as he avoided the expenses of a foreign war he was master in his own house.

The next three years, 1683-85, form an interlude of peace and domestic sunshine in John Churchill's anxious, toilsome, exciting life. He was reabsorbed into the heart and centre of the Court he knew so well, and in which he had lived

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from childhood. He enjoyed the accustomed intimate favour of the King and the Duke. We read of his being one of Charles's two or three regular tennis partners¹—with Godolphin and Feversham, "all so excellent players that if one beat the other 'tis alternatively"—and of accompanying the royal party on various progresses or excursions. He was promoted to the colonelcy of the King's Own regiment of Dragoons.² This improved the family income, but gave rise to jealous carpings.

Let's cut our meat with spoons !
The sense is as good
As that Churchill should
Be put to command the Dragoons.

The appointment was, however, not ill justified by events. Otherwise no important office or employment fell to his lot. It was perhaps the only easy, care-free time he ever had. No tortuous channels to thread, no intricate combinations to adjust, no doubtful, harassing, dire choices to take ! Peace and, if not plenty, a competence. But as the dangers of the State and the need for action or manœuvre ceased, he subsided into the agreeable obscurities of home and social life. Charles seems to have regarded him as a well-liked courtier and companion whom he had long been used to have about him, as a military officer of a certain standing, as a discreet, attractive, experienced figure, a cherished piece of furniture in the royal household, but not at this time at all considered in the larger sphere of public affairs. Indeed, when he heard Churchill's name mentioned as one who might be Sunderland's Ministerial colleague the King said lightly that "he was not resolved to have two idle Secretaries of State."³ The Court subsequently explained the rumour by cheerfully affirming that Churchill had lately been "learning to write." So all was calm and quiet, and far better than those wearing years of journeyings to and from The Hague or Edinburgh to London on errands of delicacy or distress.

¹ Rutland Papers, *H.M.C.*, xii, Part II, 81.

² The commission, dated November 19, 1683, is in the Blenheim MSS.

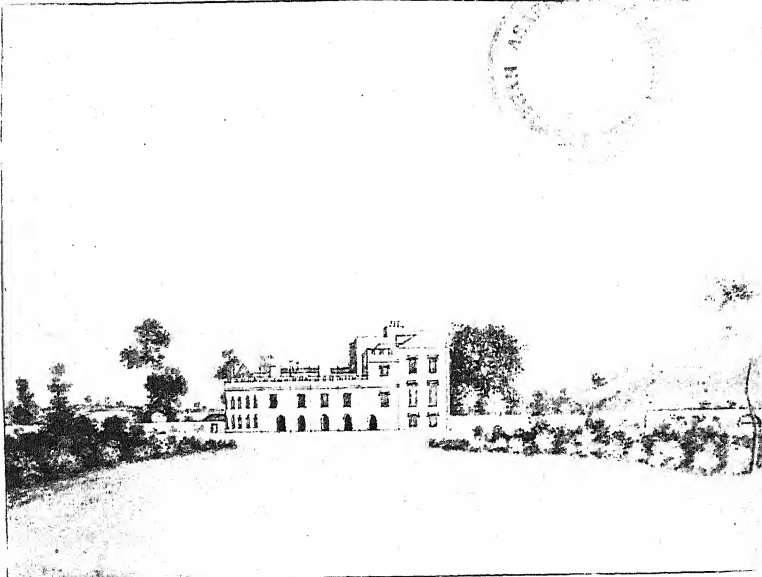
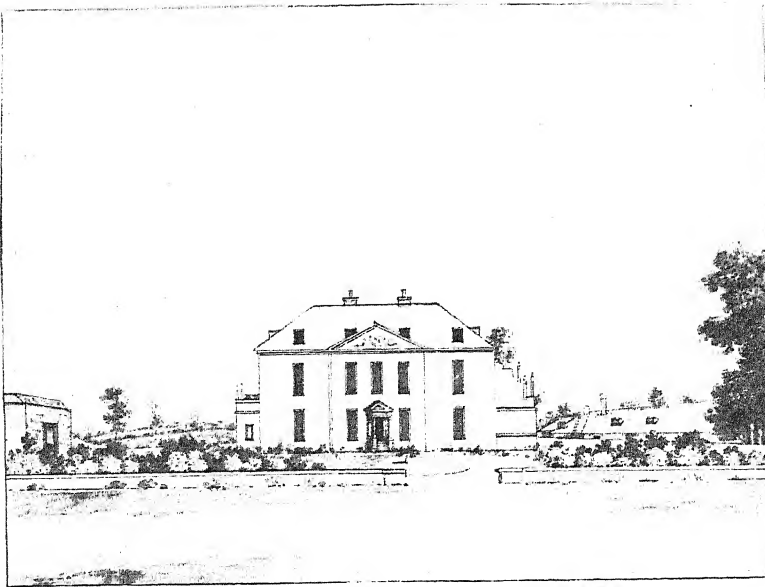
³ *H.M.C.*, vii, 362-363.

MARLBOROUGH

John could now live a great deal with his wife. He was even able upon the pay and perquisites of Colonel of the Dragoons and Colonel of a troop of Life Guards—the latter a lucrative appointment—to settle in the country. For the first time they had a home.

The Jennings family owned an old house and a few acres close to St Albans, on the opposite side of the town to their manor of Sandridge. It was called Holywell House on account of a well in which the nuns of Sopwell had softened their hard bread in bygone times. It stood on the road close to the bridge over the river Ver. About 1681 John seems to have bought out Frances' share in this small property, which, together with the manor of Sandridge, was then owned by the two sisters. Evidently Sarah was attached to her native town and family lands. Some time in 1684 she and her husband pulled down the old house, which was ill situated, and built themselves a modest dwelling in another part of the grounds, surrounded by well-laid-out gardens and furnished with a fine fishpond. The character and size of Holywell House can be judged from a contemporary sketch. Here was Marlborough's home for life. The pomp and magnificence of Blenheim Palace were for his posterity. Indeed, he seems to have been somewhat indifferent to the noble monument which the nation reared in honour of his victories. It was Holywell House that claimed his affections. Within it he gathered the pictures and treasures which he steadily collected, and upon its pediment in later life he portrayed the trophies of his battles. Here it was he lived with Sarah and his children whenever he could escape from Court or service. It was to this scene, as his letters show, with its ripening fruit and maturing trees, that his thoughts returned in the long campaigns, and here the main happiness of his life was enjoyed. Holywell House was pulled down in 1827. The elaborate prospectus of its sale contained no reference to its builder and first occupant. The river Ver has been canalized, and no recognizable trace remains.

Meanwhile their family grew. Poor "Hariote" was gone, but another daughter, Henrietta, born on July 19, 1681, survived the deadly perils of seventeenth-century infancy.



HOLYWELL HOUSE, ST ALBANS

Above, the front towards the road (the pediment contained military trophies in allusion to the Duke's victories) ; below, the garden front.

By permission of Earl Spencer

THE PRINCESS ANNE

At her christening we meet as a godmother an old acquaintance, Arabella. Her relations with the Duke had long ended. Provision had been made for "her train of bastards." The girls were in convents or being brought up as Catholics in France. Her son, a noble youth, in high favour, already showed the quality of the future Duke of Berwick. Arabella could now thankfully return to full respectability. Happily married to a Colonel Godfrey, she was to live to old age and be the witness of many surprising family events. John's third daughter, Anne—note the name—was born on February 27, 1684. She too thrived.

Although to outward appearance King Charles's Court was as brilliant and gay as ever, its inner life was seared by tragedy. The executions of great nobles whom everybody knew, like Stafford on the one side and Russell on the other; the ugly death in the Tower of Essex, so recently a trusted Minister, cast their shadows upon wide circles of relations and friends. Fear and grief lurked beneath the wigs and powder, ceremonies and masquerades. John Churchill seems at this time to have been most anxious to withdraw his wife altogether from the fevered scene, and to live with her in the country, riding to London only as required by his duties, which were also his livelihood. Sarah dutifully obeyed her husband's wish. But an event occurred which frustrated these modest ambitions.

Hitherto little has been said about the Princess Anne.¹ Henceforward she becomes the fulcrum of our tale. And here and now Sarah begins to play her commanding part. Her first contact with Anne had been in childhood. They had met in children's play at St James's when Sarah was ten and Princess Anne was only six. They were thrown together far more frequently when Sarah came to live in the palace, from 1673 onward. From the outset Anne became deeply attached to the brilliant, vivacious being who blossomed into womanhood before her childish eyes. The Princess was

¹ There is no very satisfactory biography of Queen Anne; that by Miss Anne Strickland in her *Lives of the Queens of England* (1841) has not been superseded, and is spoilt by its Jacobite partisanship. On the other hand, it is unfair to derive one's portrait of Anne from the writings of the Duchess of Marlborough.

fascinated by Sarah's knowledge, self-confidence, and strength of character. She was charmed by her care and devotion, and by all her resources of fun and comfort which so naturally and spontaneously came to her aid. Very early indeed in these young lives did those ties of love, kindling into passion on one side, and into affection and sincere friendship on the other, grow deep and strong, as yet unheeded by the bustling world. There was a romantic, indeed perfervid, element in Anne's love for Sarah to which the elder girl responded warmly several years before she realized the worldly importance of such a relationship. "The beginning of the Princess's kindness for me," wrote Sarah in after-days,

had a much earlier date than my entrance into her service. My promotion to this honour was wholly owing to impressions she had before received to my advantage; we had used to play together when she was a child, and she even then expressed a particular fondness for me. This inclination increased with our years. I was often at Court, and the Princess always distinguished me by the pleasure she took to honour me, preferably to others, with her conversation and confidence. In all her parties for amusement I was sure by her choice to be one. . . .¹

The passage of time gradually but swiftly effaced the difference in age, and Sarah as a married woman and mother at twenty-one exercised only a stronger spell upon the Princess of seventeen. "A friend," says Sarah,

was what she most coveted, and for the sake of friendship which she did not disdain to have with me, she was fond even of that equality which she thought belonged to it. She grew uneasy to be treated by me with the form and ceremony due to her rank, nor could she bear from me the sound of words which implied in them distance and superiority. It was this turn of mind which made her one day propose to me, that whenever I should happen to be absent from her, we might in all our letters write ourselves by feigned names, such as would import nothing of distinction of rank between us. Morley and Freeman were the names her fancy hit upon, and she left me to choose by which of them I would be called. My frank, open temper naturally led me to pitch upon Freeman, and so the

¹ *Conduct*, pp. 9-10.

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Princess took the other, and from this time Mrs Morley and Mrs Freeman began to converse as equals, made so by affection and friendship.

John Churchill's relations with the Princess, although on a different plane from those of Sarah, were nevertheless lighted by a growing personal attachment. His own interest in her fortunes is obvious; but upon this supervened as time passed that kind of respectful, yet sentimental devotion which Lord Melbourne showed to the young Queen Victoria. He regarded himself increasingly as Anne's protector and guide. He was her shield against the shocks and intrigues of politics and stood between her and the violent men of both parties. To secure her safety, her well-being, her peace of mind against all assaults, even in the end against Sarah herself, became the rule of his life. Never by word or action in the course of their long association, with all its historic stresses—not to the very end—not even in the bitter hour of dismissal—did he vary in his fidelity to Anne as Princess or Queen, nor in his chivalry to her as a woman.

Anne had but to reach maturity to become a factor of national consequence. Her marriage lay in the cold spheres of State policy. By King Charles's command, and with her father's acquiescence, she, like her elder sister, had been strictly bred a Protestant. Bishop Compton, a soldier before he was a priest—a very martinet of the Reformed religion—had been her preceptor. She had imbibed his teachings with simple, unquestioning, retentive faith. For her the Church of England was henceforward the one sure hope in this world and the next. The popularity of the union of William of Orange with Princess Mary in 1677 had already helped the King to hold his difficult balances at home and abroad. Here in days still critical was the opportunity for another royal Protestant alliance. Prince George of Hanover, afterwards King George I, was brought to England upon a plan of marrying the Princess, but he "left the British shores somewhat dishonourably without justifying the hopes he had excited."¹ International politics may have

¹ Mrs Thomson, *Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, i, 50.

played their part in this defection, for Louis XIV was by no means unconcerned. Anne, though but fifteen at the time, was deeply offended, and ever afterwards nourished a prejudice against her eventual successor. Her sentimental flirtation with the Earl of Mulgrave—rides in Windsor Park, poems (he was a poet), and love-letters—was sternly suppressed by the royal authority. Lord Mulgrave, banished from the Court, found himself in a leaky frigate under orders for Tangier. It is even possible that Sarah was concerned in dispersing this fairyland aberration. Royal princesses have to take the rough with the smooth.

Charles now turned to a Danish prince, and this time his choice was not obnoxious to the French King. Indeed, Louis seems to have regarded the proceeding as a fair compromise. Although Prince George of Denmark was, of course, a Lutheran Protestant, he represented only a diminished Continental state, and the whole transaction seemed consigned to a modest plane. Prince George obeyed the command of his brother, the Danish King Christian V; and in July 1683 Colonel Churchill was sent to Denmark to conduct him to England to fall in love with the Princess Anne and marry her forthwith. George of Denmark was a fine-looking man, tall, blond, and good-natured. He had a reputation for personal courage, and by a cavalry charge had rescued his brother during a battle between the Danes and the Dutch in 1677. He was neither clever nor learned—a simple, normal man, without envy or ambition, and disposed by remarkable appetite and thirst for all the pleasures of the table. Charles's well-known verdict, "I have tried him drunk and I have tried him sober, but there is nothing in him," does not do justice to the homely virtues and unfailing good-humour of his staid and trustworthy character. It may well be that the Churchills had some part in arranging this marriage. Charles Churchill had been appointed ten years before a page of honour to King Christian. He had accompanied Prince George to England upon an earlier visit. We do not know what confidences may have been interchanged by these assistants, but at any rate Anne accepted

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PRINCE GEORGE OF DENMARK
Willem Wissing
By permission of Earl Spencer

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with complacency what fortune brought her. Her uncle the King had so decided ; her father acquiesced ; Louis XIV was content ; and only William of Orange was displeased.

On July 28, 1683, the marriage was solemnized with royal pomp and popular approbation. Prince George derived a revenue of £10,000 a year from some small Danish islands. Parliament voted Anne £20,000 a year, and the King established the royal pair and their suite in a residence called the Cockpit, adjoining the Palace of Whitehall, standing where the Treasury Chambers are to-day.

This marriage of policy in which the feelings of the parties had been only formally consulted stood during twenty-four years every ordinary strain and almost unequalled family sorrows. Anne suffered either a miscarriage or a still-born baby with mechanical regularity year after year. Only one cherished son lived beyond his eleventh birthday. At forty-two she had buried sixteen children ; and when so many hopes and grave issues hung upon her progeny, none survived her. Her life was repeatedly stabbed by pain, disappointment, and mourning, which her placid courage, strong, patient spirit, firm faith, and abiding sense of public duty enabled her to sustain. Her life, so largely that of an invalid, attached itself to grand simplicities—her religion, her husband, her country's welfare, her beloved friend and mentor, Sarah. These dominants for many years wrought the harmony of her circle, and their consequences adorned her name and reign with unfading glory. Her love for her husband was richly renewed, and she knew no bounds in her admiration of his capacities. The romantic side of her nature found its satisfactions in her strangely intense affection for Sarah. And behind, ever faithful in her service, lay the pervading genius of Marlborough with his enchanted sword.¹

Anne lost no time in persuading her father to appoint Sarah one of her Ladies of the Bedchamber. The salary was not large (£200), but Sarah wished to serve the Princess. "The Duke," wrote Anne,² "had just come in when you were gone. He has given his consent for me to have you with me, and

¹ For a portrait of Anne see the plate facing p. 394.

² Coxe, i, 27.

I assure you it is a great pleasure to me. I should thank you for offering it, but I am not good at compliments." Cavillers have fastened upon the word 'offering'; but the relations of the two women were already such as to reduce the point to insignificance. It was a gracious turn of phrase in Anne to a friend whose society she desired, and not a condition in a diplomatic protocol. In a manuscript essay by Sarah, hitherto unpublished, copies of which are at Blenheim and Althorp, called *A Faithful Account of Many Things*, the following suggestive, impersonal, and of course retrospective account is given of their relations :

* The Dutchess had address and accomplishments, sufficient to engage the affections and confidence of her Mistress without owing anything to the want of them in others. But yet this made room for her the sooner and gave her some advantage; and she now began to employ all Her wit and all Her vivacity and almost all Her time to divert, and entertain, and serve, the Princess; and to fix that favour, which now one might easily observe to be encreasing towards her every day. This favour quickly became a passion; and a Passion which possessed the Heart of the Princess too much to be hid. They were shut up together for many hours daily. Every moment of Absence was counted a sort of tedious, lifeless, state. To see the Dutchess was a constant joy; and to part with her for never so short a time, a constant Uneasiness; As the Princess's own frequent expressions were. This worked even to the jealousy of a Lover. She used to say she desired to possess her wholly: and could hardly bear that she should ever escape, from this confinement, into other Company.

About 1712, Bishop Burnet compiled from Sarah's papers a substantial justification of her conduct towards Queen Anne. Two copies of this, one in the Bishop's own handwriting, have now been found at Blenheim. The Duchess was not satisfied with the production, and marked it "Not well done." Its introduction may, nevertheless, be of interest as an unpublished contemporary document.¹

* I came extream young into the Court and had the luck to be liked by manny in it, but by none more particularly than the

¹ See Appendix, I.

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Queen who took such pleasure in my company that as she had me much about her, so upon her marriage she prevailed with her Father that I should be a Lady of her Bedchamber. Her Court was so oddly composed that it was no extraordinary thing for me to be before them all in her favour, and confidence, this grew upon me to as high a degree, as was possible, *to all, that was passionately fond and tender*, nothing stood in my way, nothing was hard for me. I thought my Selfe, (all others thought it too) that I was as secure in a continuance of a high degree of favour, as ever any person was. I upon such an advancement considered what I ought to do in order to deserve and to maintain it. The great principle I laid down in myself was to serve Her with an absolute fidelity and a constant zeal. But by fidelity I did not only mean not to betray her, not to discover [disclose] her secrets, and to be true to her in everything she trusted me with : but to avoid everything, that looked like dissimulation, and flattery, even tho I saw it might displease her ; I was convinced that Princes were ruined by flatterers : I carried this so far as to think it was a part of flattery, not to tell her everything that was in any sort amisse in her. I saw poor K. James ruined by this that nobody would honestly tell him of his danger until it was past recovery : and that for fear of displeasing him. I therefore resolved to say everything that I thought concerned her to know, whom I served, with as much *affection*, as fidelity. . . .

As Sarah had to attend the Princess at Tunbridge Wells and elsewhere, and John himself still had to travel about with the Duke of York, the couple were occasionally separated, and there survive the following letters between them :¹

John to Sarah

[1683-84]

*I had writ to you by the post, but that I was persuaded this would be with you sooner. You see I am very just [regular] in writing, and I hope I shall find by the daily receiving of yours that you are so. I hope in God you are out of all danger of miscarrying, for I swear to you I love you better than all the rest of the world put together, wherefore you ought to be so just as to make me a kind return, which will make me much happier

¹ These letters, hitherto unpublished, are from the Blenheim MSS. The first letter can be dated roughly by the fact that Churchill's first surviving daughter, Henrietta, was born on July 19, 1681, and his second, Anne, on February 27, 1684.

MARLBOROUGH

than aught else in this world can do. If I can get a passage a Sunday I will come, but if I cannot I shall be with you a Monday morning by nine of the clock; for the Duke will leave this place by six. Pray [give] my most humble respects to your fair daughter, and believe me what I am with all my heart and soul,

Yours . . .

Pray tell Poidvine [his valet] I would have him wait upon Mr Legge for the note for the horses.

Friday night

[1684-85]

* I was in hopes to have found my dear soul here or at least a letter so that I might have known when you do come. There is no Gentleman of the Bedchamber here, so that I am forced to wait, which I hope will make you come before your clothes are made, and if you do not, as soon as I see a Gentleman of the Bedchamber's face, I will come away to you, for I long with all my heart and soul to be with you. Pray let me hear from you to-night if you do not come to-morrow.

For my Lady Churchill

[1684-85]

* I have not heard from you; however I will not forbear writing to let you know that your children are very well and that to-morrow we go to town and the next morning the Duke will be at Tunbridge, and I hope there will be room in the coach for me to come. The Duke will stay but one night, and if I come with him I must be forced to go back with him, so that I hope you will take it kindly my coming a hundred miles for the happiness of one night.

Monday

For my Lady Churchill at the Princess' at Tunbridge

[1685-86]

* I did yesterday receive two of yours, one of them having been forgot by a mistake of Sir John Worden's.¹ You do in one of them complain of my not writing. I do swear to you that I have not failed one day writing except yesterday and I had not then missed but that I was a-hacking with the King, and the post went just as we came home. So that you see how little reason

¹ Or Werden's.

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you have to be angry with me, and I do assure you if you do continue to be angry with me you are very unjust, for I do love you with all my heart and soul. Lady Anne asks for you very often so that I think you would do well if you wrote to her to thank her for her kindnesses in inquiring after your health. The pains which you complain on is certainly caused by your catching cold, so that if you have any kindness for me you will have a care of yourself, for your life is as dear to me as is my own. I have nothing more to add but that you and your children are the dearest things to me in this world.

Wednesday

For my Lady Churchill St James's

The closing years of Charles II were calm. In the wake of the passions of the Popish Plot and on the tide of Tory reaction the country regathered something of its poise. It seemed after a while as if the executions of the Popish and Rye House Plots had balanced each other, and a fresh start became possible. We observe the formation of a mass of central opinion, which, if it did not mitigate the strife of parties, could at least award the palm of success to the least culpable. This peculiarly English phenomenon could never henceforward be disregarded. Any party which ranged too far upon its own characteristic course was liable to offend a great body of men who, though perhaps marked by party labels, were by no means prepared to associate themselves with party extravagances.

At the end of the reign we see Charles working with several representatives of this moderate Tory view. Among these, opposed to Popery, opposed to France, mildly adverse to Dissent, content with peace, and respecting the government of King *and* Parliament, the famous Halifax was pre-eminent. His nature led him to turn against excess in any quarter; he swam instinctively against the stream. The taunt of "Trimmer" levelled at him by disappointed partisans has been accepted by history as the proof of his uprightness and sagacity. He compared himself with justice to the temperate zone which lies between "the regions in which men are frozen and the regions in which they are roasted."

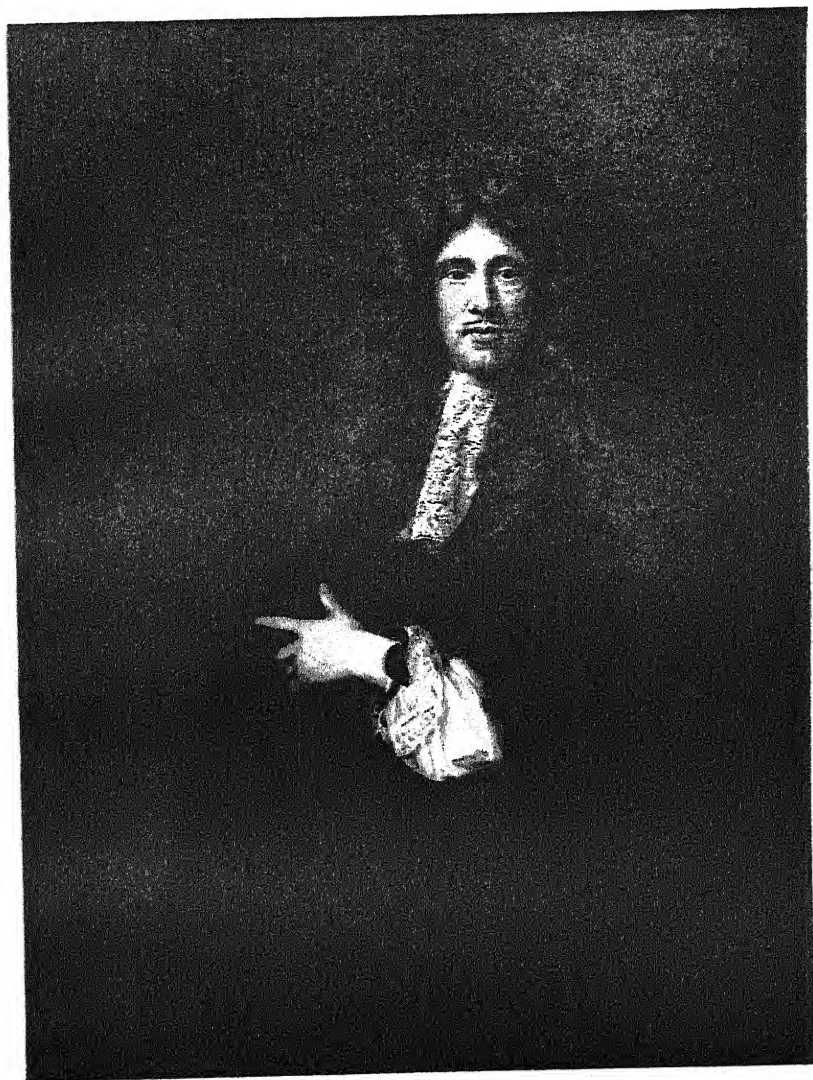
He was the foremost statesman of these times ; a love of moderation and sense of the practical seemed in him to emerge in bold rather than tepid courses. He could strike as hard for compromise as most leaders for victory. Memorable were the services which Halifax had rendered to the Crown and the Duke of York. His reasoned oratory, his biting sarcasm, his personal force and proud independence, had turned the scale against the first Exclusion Bill. His wise counsels had aided the King at crucial moments, and he himself often formed the rallying-point for men of goodwill. His greatest work for the nation and for modern times was yet to be done. Meanwhile he stood, a trusted Minister, at King Charles's side in the evening of a stormy day.

Jotham of piercing wit and pregnant thought,
 Endued by nature and by learning taught
 'To move assemblies, who but only tried
 The worse a while, then chose the better side ;
 Nor chose alone, but turned the balance too,
 So much the weight of one brave man can do.¹

Halifax must have represented Churchill's political views and temperament far more truly than any other statesman. Whether or not John learned war from Turenne, he certainly learned politics from Halifax. As we watch the Great Trimmer turning from side to side, from faction to faction, from Monmouth to William, or back again to James, yet always pursuing his aim of sobriety and appeasement at home and of marshalling all the best in England against Popery, autocracy, and France, we can almost see John's mind keeping pace and threading silently the labyrinths of intrigue in his footsteps. We are sure that when Halifax fought the Whigs against perjured testimony for the life of Stafford, and fought the Crown and the Tories against packed juries for the lives of Russell and Sidney, he carried with him the heartfelt sympathies of the Churchill who had resented the condemnation of Argyll, and whose humane conduct at the head of armies the histories of friend and foe were to proclaim.

In spite of their difference in age, rank, and authority a

¹ Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*.



THE MARQUIS OF HALIFAX
By permission of the Duke of Devonshire

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considerable measure of friendship—respect in the younger, regard in the elder—already subsisted between the two men. We have printed what Halifax wrote to his brother, Henry Savile, about the possible vacancy in the Paris Embassy in 1680—words never meant for Churchill's eye and never seen by him. We know how ardently they both desired to wean James back to conformity with the Church of England in 1681. We shall see them marching—though at different speeds and in different guise—the same difficult, perilous roads in 1687 and 1688. And far on, in 1693, after they have both intrigued with the exiled Jacobite Court, it is the renowned Halifax who goes bail for Marlborough against the displeasure of King William, and is struck off the Privy Council for his pains. It was a long and honourable association, undisturbed by indescribable perplexities, of men who all their lives meant the same thing for England, and in the main achieved their purpose.

Another figure, at that time classed among the moderates, who had sat at the council board was Sir Edward Seymour. He was "the great Commoner" of those days. A fervent Tory of touchy, rancorous temper, of independent and undependable character, with great wealth and position, he marshalled a hundred members from the over-represented West Country. He could upon occasion have produced an army from the same regions for a national cause. He was the first Speaker of the House of Commons who was not a lawyer. His pride in his connexion with the Seymour of the Reformation and his intense hatred of Catholicism made him an inflexible opponent of James; but, on the other hand, the principle of Divine Right forbade him to vote for the Exclusion Bill. His pompous austerity was not proof against the rapid alternations of favour and neglect which marked his career. He was easily tamed by office, and as easily invigorated by the loss of it. He did not trouble to reconcile his words in Opposition with his deeds as a Minister; nor *vice versa*. He defended with vigour from the Government bench the abuses he had denounced as a private Member, and blithely renewed his virtue when deprived of power. On the whole, he was the most

magnificent, though by no means the most successful, place-hunter of his day. We shall meet him again, in 1688 and also later.

A third councillor, by hereditary distinction (for his father had been a trusted Lord Chancellor), Daniel Finch, Earl of Nottingham, was a devout Churchman, who, more than any other layman, could influence the bishops. Although he belonged to what would now be called the High Church party, he was so much alarmed at the intolerant processes of the Catholics in France and at the persecutions launched by Louis XIV that he tried to mitigate by every means the quarrel of the Episcopacy with the Dissenters, and to establish a general unity among all the Protestant bodies. His influence in the revolution of 1688 was to be profound.

But the daily work of administration was mainly in the hands of three men of more easy and practical temper, if of less solid political power. Laurence Hyde—now Earl of Rochester, “a Danby in a minor key”; the elusive, imponderable Sunderland; and always, “never in the way and never out of the way,” Churchill’s lifelong friend Godolphin. These were lightly called “the Chits.” With all of them Churchill was intimate. The two last, and especially Godolphin, represented the nearest approach in those times to the high permanent civil servants of the present day. Well trained and deeply informed, smooth and competent in business, without marshalled interests behind them, or vehement party views, they adapted themselves readily to the royal will, and sought chiefly to give it a prudent and effective expression. They stood for less, but performed more than the more rugged political leaders.¹

The King himself basked in the mellow light which had followed so much rough weather. He had overcome his enemies; and at whatever cost to his dignity or honour had restored peace at home and kept out of war abroad. He could afford to forgive Monmouth. He was strong enough to bring back James. He revolved with tolerant mind Halifax’s desire to summon Parliament, and might well

¹ Cf. Feiling, *History of the Tory Party*, chapter vii.

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expect that it would be loyal and serviceable. He still balanced and measured the grievous, insoluble problems with which he was oppressed: the ferocious divisions of his people, his want of money—that damnable thing—his dependence upon France, the odious state of Europe, the dangers of renewed Parliamentary strife, and, above all, the anxieties of the succession. For all his loves and troop of bastards, he had no legitimate heir. Strong and unswerving as he had been for the strict application of the principle of hereditary right, no one knew better than he the awful dangers which James's religion and character would bring upon the land. In spite of his own profound leanings to the old faith of Christendom, he had never lost contact with, and had in the main preserved the confidence of, the Church of England. He had used the laws of England and its Constitution as effective weapons in his warfare with the Whigs. He had never broken these laws in the process, nor trespassed beyond an arguable legality. He knew and loved his brother well, and foresaw how James's virtues and vices alike would embroil him with a nation as stubborn and resolute as he.

Yet where else to turn? How England would have rejoiced could he have but given her his handsome, gifted, courageous by-blow—"our beloved Protestant Duke"! But never would he vitiate the lawful succession of the Crown, nor tolerate that picking and choosing between rival claims which would transform an hereditary into an elective monarchy. Had he not for this wrestled with his people and his Parliament? Was not the fate of Russell, of Sidney, of Essex, a proof of his invincible resolve?

Then there was William; the busy—nay, tireless—fiery but calculating, masterful and accepted ruler of Holland, and foremost champion of the Protestant world. The blood royal of England flowed in his veins, and Mary his wife was second heir-presumptive to the Crown. Here was a foreign sovereign, backed by a constitutional government and loyal fleets and armies, whose profound interest in the succession had never been disguised. How shrewd and patient William

had been ; how skilfully he had steered a course through the English storms ! Charles could admire kingcraft in another. William had in no way added to his difficulties ; he had throughout professed a warm and dutiful affection for him. The Dutchman's personal relations with the leaders of both the English parties were widespread, direct, and close. He maintained an extensive correspondence across the North Sea, and was almost as closely immersed in English and Scottish affairs as in those of Holland. But he never committed himself to supporting the Exclusion Bills or any of the alternative projects for limiting the prerogatives of a Popish king. In vain did the Whigs appeal to him to declare himself in favour of the Exclusion Bill, saying in effect, "Of course, this will give you your chance." William knew better. He had seen clearly that, with James excluded, Monmouth would become a far more formidable rival. He saw his own chance would only come at a second remove. But he understood James thoroughly, and placed a steady confidence in his capacity to break his neck. The Prince of Orange was sure that James would never abandon the attempt to compel the English nation to submit to autocratic rule and Catholic conversion, and equally sure that the English nation would never submit to such designs. Hence in his far-seeing way he did not wish James's powers to be specially limited by law. It was better for William that James should have a free hand, and if this led him to disaster, then at least his successor would not be a king with a mutilated prerogative.

Charles comprehended this situation with a nice taste ; he knew all the moves upon the board. But what more could he do ? At any rate, it seemed that time might be allowed to play its part. The King was only fifty-four ; his health in general at this time seemed robust. To many intimates his life seemed as good as that of his brother. He could not measure the deep inroads which continuous sexual excitement had wrought upon his vigorous frame. Another ten years, to which he could reasonably look forward, might clarify the whole scene. So he returned with cordial acquiescence to the

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pleasures and amusements of his Court, toyed with Halifax's proposals for a new Parliament, rejoiced that the ship of State was for the moment on an even keel, and left the baffling problems of the future to solve themselves. They did so.

Meanwhile the Duke of York shared in the revived popularity of the Crown. He became again in fact, if not in form, Lord High Admiral. The King, resting on his laurels, resigned much policy to his hand. He was looked upon as the leader of the extreme Tories. Had he not, it was said by persons who utterly misread the forces at work, been right all the time with his counsels of firmness? Had he not been skilful in managing the Scottish Parliament? Did not his sincere convictions and his bravery afloat and ashore deserve the highest respect? Versifiers wrote :¹

The glory of the British line,
Old Jimmy's come again.

Indeed, the ardour of the Tory reaction began to cause some misgivings among the ablest counsellors of Charles II. Figures like Roger L'Estrange, long Charles's censor and pamphleteer, represented at the opposite end of the political scale opinions as dangerous and odious to the nation as those muttered by the Rye House conspirators. The lawyer Jeffreys, now the Tory Lord Chief Justice, whose brutal nature, savage partisanship, and high professional gifts made him a perfect instrument of judicial murder, ruled the Bench. Even those who most welcomed the turn of the tide were disquieted by its force, exclaiming as they shook their heads, "This is too good to last." But the Duke of York, now lord of the ascendant, held a different opinion.

Churchill was by this time in the middle thirties. He was in a position to judge men and affairs upon excellent information. It is only here and there that some record of his opinion exists. We can judge his politics chiefly by his friends. He was not accustomed to air his views upon grave matters, and such letters as have been preserved concern themselves only with private or family matters. We may be sure that he

¹ *Cit. Feiling*, p. 198.

thought deeply and clearly about the succession to the Crown, upon which such fateful issues hung. In the course of his service to James he had been brought into sharp antagonism with Monmouth and his party. Gone were the comradeships of Maestricht days. Churchill was definitely ranged and classed with the Tories—and with the high Tories—against all interference with his master's hereditary rights. He had the best opportunities of informing himself about the King's health; he had seen him a few years before smitten with a mysterious and alarming illness. It was now certain that if James were alive at the death of King Charles, he would ascend the throne, and Churchill had every reason but one to hope for the highest favour and advancement at his hands. Yet that one adverse reason was enough to undo all. The wise, observant soldier who had dwelt so long at or near the centre of power had no doubts whatever of the clash that must ensue between his devout, headstrong, bigoted, resolute patron and the whole resisting power of a Protestant nation. Here again his course was determined. In defence of the Protestant religion he would sever all loyalties, extinguish all gratitudes, and take all necessary measures. His wife's intimate, affectionate relations with the Princess Anne, her offer to undertake the office of her Lady of the Bedchamber, must have been in full accord with his wishes and designs. The influence, daily becoming decisive and dominant, which the Churchills exerted in the household of the Prince and Princess of Denmark was steadfastly used to strengthen and fortify its already marked Protestant character, and to link the young Princess with leading statesmen and divines who would confirm her vigorous faith.

The situation had, as we have seen, arisen naturally, by the invisible impulses of friendship and custom. It had now become a definite and primary factor in the Churchills' fortunes, as it was presently to be in those of the nation. From this time forward John and Sarah began to be increasingly detached from the Duke's circle, and noticeably associated—beyond the religious gulf—with his younger daughter. Indeed, during the reign of James II Churchill

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was regarded by an informed foreign observer¹ as Princess Anne's friend and counsellor rather than the trusted servant of the new King. This in quiet times meant little, but a day was soon to come when it would mean everything. A connexion had been formed around the Protestant royal personage who stood third in the line of succession, cemented by a friendship and sympathy destined to withstand the shocks and trials of more than twenty years. This union of intense convictions, sentiments, habits, and interests was soon to be exposed to the sharpest and most violent tests, and to withstand them with the strength of solid rock.

The King seemed in his usual health at the beginning of 1685. After his dinner on the night of January 26 he sat, as was his custom, with the Duchess of Portsmouth and a small company of friends. Thomas Bruce, the Earl of Ailesbury, with whom Churchill's functions must often have brought him in friendly contact—to whom we owe most delightful, if sometimes untrustworthy, memoirs²—was on duty as Gentleman of the Bedchamber. He found the King “in the most charming humour possible.” But

when we came to the district of the bedchamber, I by my office was to light him to the bedchamber door, and giving the candle to the page of the backstairs, it went out, although a very large wax candle and without any wind. The page of the backstairs was more superstitious, for he looked on me, shaking his head.

The King chatted agreeably with his gentlemen as he undressed, and spoke about the repairing of Winchester Castle and the gardens he was making there. He said to Ailesbury, “I will order John” (a familiar word for the Earl of Bath, the Groom of the Stole, who was with the King when a boy) “to put you in waiting the first time I go thither, and although it be not your turn, to show you the place I delight so in, and shall be so happy this week as to have my house covered with lead.” “And God knows,” comments Ailesbury, “the Saturday following he was put in his coffin.”

¹ See below, pp. 237, 245-246.

² *Memoirs*, pp. 85-87.

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That night Ailesbury, lying in the next room, and “sleeping but indifferently, perceived that the King turned himself sometimes, not usual for him.” The next morning he was “pale as ashes” and “could not or would not say one word.” A violent fit of apoplexy supervened, and after gamely enduring prolonged torture at the hands of his distracted physicians Charles II breathed his last. All untimely, the long-dreaded event had come to pass. The interlude of peace was over, and King James II ruled the land.

CHAPTER XII

SEDGEMOOR

(1685)

FOR two years past James had played an active second part in the government of the kingdom, and once his brother's approaching end became certain, he concerned himself with every precaution necessary to ensure an unopposed succession. Indeed, it was not until after he had posted the Royal Guards at various important points, and had even obtained the dying King's signature to some measures of financial convenience, that, on the promptings of the Duchess of Portsmouth, he secured Charles's spiritual welfare by bringing a priest up the backstairs to receive him into the Church of Rome and give him extreme unction. Within a quarter of an hour of the King's death he met the Privy Council, whose duty it is to recognize the new sovereign. He laboured to contradict the belief that he was revengeful or inclined to arbitrary rule. He declared himself resolved to maintain both in State and Church a system of government established by law,

for he recognized the members of the English Church as loyal subjects, he knew that the laws of England were sufficient to make the King a great monarch and that he would maintain the rights and prerogatives of the Crown, and would not invade any man's property.

It has even been asserted he went so far at this critical moment as to say that, "as regards his private religious opinions, no one should perceive that he entertained them," but that this sentence was deleted from the official report.¹

These declarations were received by the dignitaries and magnates of the realm with profound relief and joy, and as the Royal Proclamation spread throughout the land it everywhere evoked expressions of gratitude and loyalty. Charles II

¹ Ranke, *History of England*, iv, 214-215.

had died at the moment when the Tory reaction was at its highest. The sentimental nature of the English people was stirred to its depth by the death of the King, who if he had tricked them often, had not, as they now felt, served them ill, and whose personal charm and human qualities and weaknesses were pervasively endearing. In the wave of grief and hope sweeping the nation the unbridgeable differences of faith, policy, and temper which separated a new prince and an old people were forgotten. James ascended the throne of his ancestors and predecessors with as fair a chance as ever monarch had.

The summoning of a Parliament, after a lapse of more than three years, was now indispensable. More than half the revenues of the State ceased upon the demise of the Crown. The need was otherwise unanswerable, and the hour could not be more propitious. On February 9 the writs were issued, and the general election of 1685 began. On the second Sunday after his accession, near noon, when the Court was thronged, King James and the Queen attended Mass and received the Sacrament in the Queen's chapel, the doors of which were thrown open for all to see. This act of high consequence dispelled the rosy hopes of the Protestant Court and aroused immediately the London clergy. But the Royal Proclamation, striking while the iron was hot, was not overtaken in those days of slow and imperfect news. The nation voted upon its first impulse and returned a Parliament which in quality and character represented all the strongest elements in the national life, and was in temper as loyal to the Crown as the Restoration Parliament of 1660. Not only embittered partisans, but cool observers were amazed by the change in the public mood. Four years after three successive annual Parliaments had ravened for the Bill to exclude him from the throne, James found himself in the presence of an ardent and devoted House of Commons. To this new Parliament he repeated his original declaration as amended. From it he received an enthusiastic response, and the revenues, grudged and meted to his brother, were to him voted in their amplitude for life. He had only to practise his religion for his conscience' sake as a man, to

observe the laws of the realm, and to keep the promises he had made respecting them, in order to receive and enjoy the faithful service of his subjects for all his days. He began his reign with that same caution and moderation which had marked his first government in Scotland, and he reaped an immediate reward. Events were, however, at hand which would impel and empower him to cast aside these wise and vital restraints.

He ruled in the main with the later Ministers of Charles II, and such changes as he made in no way broke the continuity of the Government. His brothers-in-law, the two Hydes, Clarendon and Rochester, became Lord Privy Seal and Lord Treasurer respectively. Halifax, who had sought the Treasury, and had been, but for King Charles's sudden death, on the point of exposing Rochester's peculations, was constrained to accept a so-called promotion to the Presidency of the Council. Godolphin continued Chamberlain to the Queen, and Sunderland and Middleton were the Secretaries of State. Churchill ranked below these leading figures. It may be that his master was not unconscious of a fissure between them. Yet he stood in good favour with the new régime. In the list of the nine Lords of the Bedchamber his name was second only to Peterborough's.¹ His colonelcy of the Dragoons was confirmed; and he was immediately despatched on a mission to Versailles, the ostensible object of which was to notify Louis XIV of the accession, and its substantial purpose to obtain an increased subsidy for the English Crown. For this task his negotiations in 1679 and 1681 and his full knowledge of the secret relations of the two Kings had well prepared him. But Louis, taking time by the forelock, had forestalled the request. Before Churchill could reach Paris Barillon had waited upon James with an unsolicited gift of 500,000 livres, and it was thought only becoming to express gratitude for this modest favour before asking for the two or three millions a year which the English King and Court regarded as desirable.

¹ *Mémoire* of September [?], 1687 (*Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 164, f. 232). This same *Mémoire* says, "M^{de} De Chercheil est dame d'honn[eu]r de la P[rincesse] de D[annemar]k qui l'aime tendrem[en]t. Elle a de l'esprit, et l'on est persuadé que c'est elle qui contribue a éloigner cette P[rincesse] de la Cour, de peur que le Roy son Père ne luy parle sur la religion."

Churchill was therefore overtaken by fresh instructions, and his mission was limited to ceremonies and thanks.¹ On this visit Churchill seems to have committed an unusual indiscretion. "The Earl of Galway," says Burnet,

told me that when he [Churchill] came over [to France] in the first compliment upon the King's coming to the Crown, he said then to him that if the King was ever prevailed upon to alter our religion he would serve him no longer, but would withdraw from him.²

Charles James Fox comments :

How little could Barillon guess that he [Louis XIV] was negotiating with one who was destined to be at the head of an Administration which in a few years would send the same Lord Churchill not to Paris to implore Louis for succour towards enslaving England or to thank him for pensions to her monarchs, but to combine all Europe against him in the cause of liberty !³

That this proved to be Churchill's last visit to Paris was not, as will be shown in another volume, entirely his own fault. He returned to England at the beginning of April in time for the splendours of the coronation. An English peerage was conferred upon him, and he became Baron Churchill of Sandridge. Rougher work was soon at hand.

The news of King Charles's death fell like a thunderbolt on his well-loved, wayward bastard at The Hague. Monmouth by his natural vivacity had lent a fleeting gleam of gaiety to the dull, strait-laced routine of the Dutch Court. Politics apart, he had been received with genuine relish. But in the midst of dancing and ice-carnivals came the news that, instead of a father about to consummate an act of forgiveness, there ruled in England an uncle who had suffered insult and exile through his rivalry, whose last six years had been consumed in struggling against the party he led, and who hated him with all the hatred of intimacy, alike as Protestant and as Pretender.

Monmouth's mood of despair led him to seek in the

¹ Correspondence between Louis XIV and Barillon, *apud* C. J. Fox, *James II*, Appendix, pp. xxiv *seq.*

² Burnet, iii, 269.

³ C. J. Fox, *James II*, p. 88.

companionship of his fond mistress, the beautiful Lady Wentworth, a shelter from the mischances of public life. He quitted The Hague at William's request within a few hours, and settled himself with his charming friend at Brussels. But more turbulent and daring spirits were not so agreeably soothed. Argyll—the "hunted partridge"—in his Dutch retreat brooded intently upon the sanctity of synodical as opposed to episcopal Christianity, and burned to be in the Highlands again at the head of his adoring clansmen. The plotter Ferguson, Lord Grey of Wark, Wade, and a dozen or more prominent men who had escaped from England and Scotland after the Rye House exposure, gripped Monmouth and bound him to a fatal design. Lady Wentworth herself, who loved him so well, loved also that he should be a king. She offered her jewels and wealth for his service. All these exiles had in their minds the picture of England in 1682. They saw again the fierce, eager, resolute forces—the great Whig lords, the House of Commons majorities, the City of London, the vindictive juries, the unrepresented Protestant masses—which had only yesterday seemed about to sweep their cause and themselves to triumph. They could not believe in the reality of a change of mood so swift and utter as had in fact occurred since then. Monmouth yielded against his better judgment to their importunities. It was agreed that Argyll should invade and rouse the Highlands and that Monmouth should land in England. Two tiny expeditions of three ships each, filled with munitions and bitter men of quality, were organized from slender resources, and three weeks after Argyll had set out for Kirkwall Monmouth sailed for the Channel.

It was curious that William should not be able to prevent these descents upon a friendly State. We are assured by the highest authorities that he did his utmost, that he advised Monmouth to offer his services to the Empire against the Turks, that he exerted his authority upon the Admiralty of Amsterdam to prevent these sailings. His conduct was impeccable. It was also ineffectual. The unhappy Stadtholder was compelled to remain an impotent spectator of an enter-

prise which, whatever might happen, must conduce enormously to his advantage. If by chance Monmouth succeeded, England would become his Protestant and martial ally against France and French Catholicism. If Monmouth failed, as seemed certain, the succession to the English crown would be remarkably simplified. The most successful statesmen are those who know how by their actions or inactions to reconcile self-interest with correctitude.

Monmouth tossed on the waves for nineteen days, driven hither and thither by the winds. He escaped the numerous English cruisers which watched the Straits of Dover, and on June 11 dropped anchor in that same Dorsetshire port of Lyme Regis in which, as the reader will recall, Eleanor Drake had formerly suffered the severities of a siege, and for which her son-in-law, Sir Winston Churchill, was now Member of Parliament. The Duke and his confederates, who had beguiled the anxious voyage with Cabinet-making, landed forthwith. Sword in hand, they repaired to the market-place, where they were received with rapture by the townsfolk, who, like themselves, were still living in the England of the Popish Plot, and looked back with reverence to the great days of Blake and Cromwell. Monmouth issued a proclamation, drawn up by Ferguson, accusing the King of having murdered Charles II, and of every other crime; affirming also that he himself was born in wedlock, and claiming to be the champion of the laws, liberty, and religion of the realm. The rush of adherents to enlist baffled the clerks who registered their names. Within twenty-four hours he was joined by fifteen hundred men.

Meanwhile messengers from the Mayor of Lyme, who abandoned the contumacious town, were riding as fast as relays of horses could carry them to London. On the morning of June 13 they broke in upon Sir Winston with the startling news that his constituency was in rebellion. He took them to the palace, and, summoning his son, was conducted to the King.

This must have been a great day for old Sir Winston, and one in which all the harmonies of his life seemed to merge.

Here was the King for whose sacred rights and line he had fought with sword and pen, for whom he had suffered so much, and who had done him the honour—no mere formality—of making him four times a grandfather, once more assaulted by rebellion. The same obstinate, traitorous forces—happily without votes—were again rampant in those same familiar scenes in which he had lived his life. The old cause was once more at stake in the old place; and here stood his son, Colonel of the Dragoons, the rising soldier of the day, high in the favour of the threatened monarch, long linked to his service—he it was who would march forward at the head of the Household troops, the *corps d'élite*, to lay the insolent usurper low. It was Sir Winston's apotheosis. There must have been a strong feeling of the continuity of history in this small group coincidence had brought together.

Instant resolves were taken. All available forces were ordered to Salisbury. That very night Churchill set out with four troops of the Blues and two of his own Dragoons—in all about three hundred horse—followed by Colonel Kirke with five companies of the Queen's Regiment.

Monmouth could scarcely have struck a more unlucky moment: Parliament was in session, the King's popularity was still at coronation height. An Act of Attainder against Monmouth was passed. The price of £5000 was set on his head. The Commons voted large, immediate supplies, and both Houses assured the King of their resolve to die in his defence. Moreover, the troops from Tangier had already landed. A prompt requisition was presented to William of Orange to send back, in accordance with the convention under which they served, the six English and Scottish regiments maintained in Dutch pay. William lost no time in complying. He had been unable to stop Monmouth's expedition from starting—it had got safely away; he could now make sure that it was destroyed. However painful it must have been to him on personal grounds to aid in the ruin of his inconvenient Protestant rival—so lately his attractive guest—he had to do his duty. The troops were dispatched forthwith; and William even offered to come over in person to take

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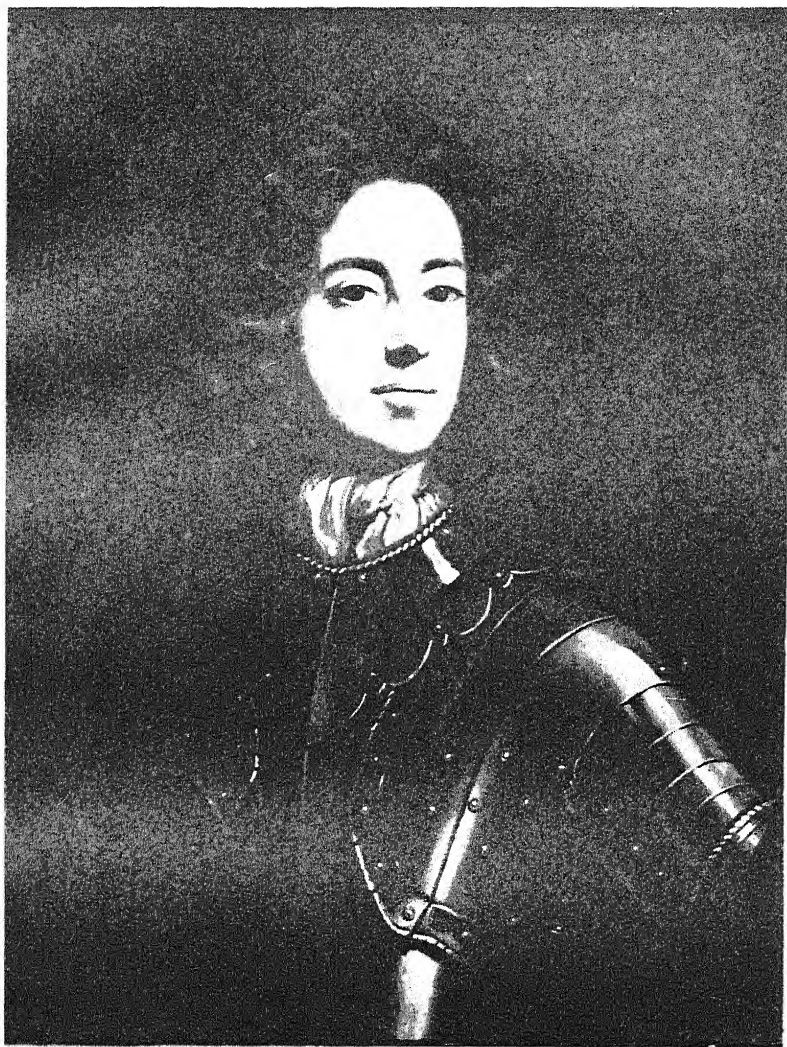
command of the royal army. This kindly proposal was declined.

Churchill marched south with great rapidity. He reached Bridport on June 17, having covered 120 miles in four days. The situation was even more serious than had been supposed when he left London. The nobility and gentry, whose influence had so long returned Sir Winston to the House of Commons, were loyal in the Cavalier tradition to the King. The people, countryfolk and townsmen alike, were for the Duke and Dissenting Protestantism. The militias of Dorset, Devon, and Somerset had been partially mobilized under the general direction of the Duke of Albemarle. Their training and discipline were weak, and their hearts were with "the Protestant Duke." Reinforcements of regular troops were imperative. From Bridport Churchill wrote to the King :

I am sorry to send your Majesty this ill news ; which is [that] unless speedy course be taken, we are like to lose this [part of the] country to the rebels ; for we have those two [militia] regiments run away a second time . . . and it happened thus : The Duke of Albemarle sends to Sir E. Phellipps and Colonel Luttrell, that he would be at Axminster on such a day with some forces, and would have them meet him there ; so away marched those two regiments, one out of Chard and the other out of Crewkern ; and when they came to the top of the hill within half a quarter of a mile of the town, there came out some country people, and said the Duke of Monmouth was in the town ; at that, one Captain Littleton cried out, We are all betrayed ! so the soldiers immediately look[ed] one upon another, and threw down their arms, and fled, leaving their Officers and Colours behind ; half, if not the greatest part, are gone to the rebels. I do humbly submit this to your Majesty's commands in what I shall do in it, for there is not any relying on these regiments that are left unless we had some of your Majesty's standing forces to lead them on and encourage them ; for at this unfortunate news I never saw people so much daunted in my life.¹

On the 18th Churchill was at Axminster, and on the 19th at Chard, in country which he knew so well (Ashe House was but eight miles away). Here his patrols came into contact

¹ Northumberland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 99.



THE EARL OF MARLBOROUGH
John Closterman
National Portrait Gallery

with the hostile forces ; and here also was a messenger from Monmouth reminding him of their old friendship and begging his aid. Churchill dismissed the messenger and sent the letter to the King.

Monmouth, at the head of some three thousand men and four guns, had entered Taunton on the 18th. Here he was received with royal state and lively affection. He was persuaded to proclaim himself King, thus confirming William in his sense of duty to James. The rebel numbers rose to above seven thousand, and he might have doubled them had he possessed the arms. His handful of cavalry, under Lord Grey of Wark, were mounted upon horses mostly untrained or even unbroken. His infantry were only partly armed with muskets, and for the rest depended upon scythes fastened on broomsticks. They had neither more nor less training than the militia, out of whom, indeed, they were largely composed. Nevertheless, in their zeal, in their comprehension of the quarrel, and in their stubborn courage, they were the ore from which the Ironsides had been forged.

We do not know what happened at Whitehall after Sir Winston went back to his dwelling, and John, appointed to the rank of Brigadier-General, set forth upon the Great West Road. He certainly hoped, and probably expected, that he would have the command of all the troops available ; but in this he was disappointed. It may be that his old comradeship with Monmouth was counted against him. Certainly his own Protestantism and his close local association with the area affected by a Protestant movement might have caused misgivings in the Royal Council. At any rate, there were second thoughts. On June 19 Sunderland wrote to inform him that the Frenchman Feversham had been appointed Commander-in-Chief. This was a significant event ; Feversham, though twelve years older, had never held Churchill's commands nor gained his distinction upon the Continent. Although present both at Maestricht and Enzheim and in several campaigns, Feversham had been only an observer. Churchill held an equal rank, and was an English-born soldier. He resented his supersession, and he knew it could only come

from mistrust. The causes of his cleavage from his master, though deep, were latent and might never rise to the surface. He was still—even more than Feversham—to all eyes his faithful trusted agent and personal intimate. He had been for the last four years solidly and actively opposed to Monmouth. In James's cause he had countered him in the political negotiations and intrigue of the Exclusion Bills. His interests, whether as servant to James, as confidential adviser to Princess Anne, or even as a friend of William, were all equally opposed to this interloper in the lawful succession to the Crown. Here was a campaign begun which he had in his own hands, on which his heart was set, and which he knew himself more capable than anyone to direct. He did not entirely conceal his anger. "I see plainly," he wrote on July 4 to Clarendon,¹ "that I am to have the trouble, and that the honour will be another's." One of the remaining links which bound him to James's personal fortunes may well have broken here: nevertheless, with his customary self-control he subordinated his feelings to his duty and his policy, submitted himself with perfect propriety to Feversham, and directed his wrath solely upon the enemy.²

It is not our purpose to follow this strange small campaign in detail. Churchill, once in contact with the rebels, never let go. His well-trained force of regular cavalry, widely spread, enveloped and stabbed the flanks and rear of Monmouth's army. He followed them wherever they moved, changing from one flank to the other as occasion served, and always labouring to impress upon the enemy, and especially upon Monmouth, whose temperament he knew well, that they were aggressively opposed by the loyal regular forces of the Crown. At the same time he endeavoured to keep the militia out of danger, to have them concentrated and as far from the enemy as possible at points where he could, with his professional troops, ensure alike not only their lives but their fidelity.

¹ Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, i, 141.

² He was promoted Major-General on July 3, possibly to soften his supersession by Feversham; but he knew nothing of this till after the battle.

Meanwhile such parts of the regular forces as could be spared from an agitated capital were approaching. Kirke, newly landed from Tangier, with his companies of the Queen's Regiment, joined Churchill at Chard on June 21. They had accomplished 140 miles in eight days—a fine feat for infantry, even with some help from horses. With this reinforcement Churchill revolved the chances of a decisive action. He wrote on June 21 to the Duke of Somerset, "I have forces enough not to apprehend [fear] the Duke of Monmouth, but on the contrary should be glad to meet with him and my men are in so good heart."¹ The quality and temper of the militia was, however, prohibitive; they were prone to join the rebels rather than fight them—in fact, they went over by whole companies. Churchill did not in this event feel strong enough to bar the way to Bristol, as was desired at Whitehall. No course was open to him but to await the arrival of the royal army, and meanwhile claw the enemy.

Monmouth's only chance was swiftness and audacity; without a wide, popular uprising he was doomed. The elements existed which might make him a King, but these elements were political rather than military. He must seize towns and cities and gain their arms and supplies before the royal troops arrived in strength. Bristol, the second city in the kingdom, was full of his partisans. Here was his first obvious objective. To gain the mastery of Bristol would be a formidable advantage. The distance from Lyme to Bristol is about seventy miles, and every risk should have been run to arrive there at the earliest moment. He had, of course, to organize his forces, and must spend some precious days in drilling his recruits. Moreover, most of his transport was drawn by oxen. He was received at Bridgwater with all the enthusiasm of Taunton. He was harried on his marches by Churchill, and hampered by want of trustworthy cavalry to drive him off. It was not until June 25, a fortnight after his landing, that, with forces now swollen to eight thousand foot and a thousand horse, he stood before the decayed ramparts of Bristol. He was too late. Feversham

¹ Northumberland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 98.

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had entered the city on the 23rd with two hundred horse. The Duke of Beaufort held the hill where the castle had formerly stood, and thence intimidated the population. The royal army was already near Bath, and Churchill lay upon Monmouth's other flank. In these circumstances, only some of which were known to him, he abandoned his design ; and with his turning back from Bristol his adventure became forlorn.

Churchill followed close at his heels, cutting off stragglers, hunting his patrols, and looking for a chance to strike. We must not omit to mention, since Wolseley is reproached with suppressing it, that on Friday, the 26th, a mile beyond the town of Pensford, Churchill halted his troops and hanged one "Jarvis the feltmaker," a prisoner who had been taken two days before ; and that Jarvis died "obstinately and impenitently."

That same evening Churchill joined Feversham at Bath, where his brother, Charles Churchill, had also arrived, having escorted a train of artillery from Portsmouth. The next day Feversham advanced with the bulk of his forces to attack the rebels at Norton St Philip. The affair was ill-conducted. Five hundred of the royal foot, with some cavalry under the Duke of Grafton, involved themselves in a narrow lane, the hedgerows of which were lined by Monmouth's musketeers. These two by-blows of Charles II—bastard versus bastard—were locked in semi-fratricidal strife. Feversham and Churchill both arrived on the scene. The rebels fought stoutly, and the royal forces, drawing off with a loss of eighty men killed, retired to Bradford in some dissatisfaction. In spite of this incident, Monmouth's army began to melt. Two thousand men deserted. A convoy of arms and stores which was sorely needed was captured near Frome. Taunton, lately so ardent, sent a deputation to beseech him not to return to their town. Upon all this came the tidings that Argyll's revolt had been extinguished and that he and Rumbold had already been beheaded. Despondency and fear began to over-spread not only Monmouth's troops, but all those friendly districts which had compromised themselves in his cause. Nowhere did they weigh more heavily than in his own heart.

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On July 3 Monmouth in the deepest gloom re-entered Bridgwater, which he had left eleven days before. Not one man of note had joined him. His peasant army, officered by tradesmen, was wearied and perplexed by ceaseless marches and counter-marches in mud and rain, evidently to no purpose. But those fires still smouldered in their hearts which success would have fanned into flame and which in many only death could quench. On the 5th Feversham, with Churchill and all the royal forces in one body, came from Somerton and camped at Weston Zoyland. The energy of the campaign had sensibly relaxed since the new general had assumed command. Oppressed by the weather and only now provided with tents, he was content to leave the initiative to the rebels and settled himself in a good position facing the plain of Sedgemoor. A ditch, boggy in places, known locally as the Bussex Rhine, passable by cavalry only at two passages, or 'plungeons,' ran across his front and seemed to excuse him from the labour of entrenching. His cavalry billeted themselves in the village of Weston, on the right of his line; his artillery was on the opposite flank, a quarter of a mile farther off. The militia were left out of harm's way a good many miles behind. Not counting these auxiliaries, he mustered seven hundred horse, including the Household Cavalry and six battalions of infantry—in all, nearly three thousand regular troops with sixteen guns.

The two small armies were now scarcely three miles apart, and Monmouth must choose his course without delay. Should he assault the royal position? Should he defend himself in Bridgwater? Should he march once again northward on the Bristol road towards Gloucestershire, Cheshire, and the adherents who were believed to be assembling there? To attack the regulars in the open field was to court destruction. To be shut up in Bridgwater was only to postpone it. But the roads to the north were still open. He could certainly march past Feversham's right and cross the Avon at Keynsham before him. Though pursued, he would advance into a friendly region and a new scene. He chose the last alternative, and during the 4th and 5th disposed and prepared his forces with that intention. To deceive the enemy he employed the

inhabitants of Bridgwater ostentatiously upon the fortification of the town, and also issued orders for a retreat upon Taunton. Churchill, who digested every scrap of information, wrote on the 4th to Clarendon :

I find by the enemy's warrant to the constables that they have more mind to get horses and saddles than anything else which looks as if he had a mind to break away with his horse to some other place and leave his foot entrenched at Bridgwater.

Monmouth, in fact, meant to march with all his force—at least, at the outset. But when, on the morning of the 5th, he quitted Bridgwater and was crossing the town bridge to join his men in the Castle Field, a local farm labourer¹ met him with intimate news of the royal army. It lay scattered in negligent fashion without entrenchment. The last night at Somerton no proper guards had been set ; and it was said that laxity, drunkenness, and roystering prevailed. From the tower of Bridgwater Church the whole camp could be seen. Monmouth returned to the town, climbed the tower, saw for the first time the loosely spread camp, and took alike the most daring and the most prudent decision of his life—a night attack !

He called a council, and his supporters agreed. The farm labourer Godfrey, sent to make sure there were no entrenchments, confirmed his first report and undertook to guide the rebel column across the ground he knew well. The afternoon was spent in preparations and in prayer. Ferguson and the other preachers harangued the fanatical, homely bands. The plan was less simple than plans of war by night should be. The whole force would make a march of about six miles round Feversham's right. Grey's cavalry would branch off and, avoiding Chedzoy village, cross the Bussex Rhine at one of the plungeons to the east of the royal camp, surprise the Dragoons and Blues in Weston Zoyland, fire the village, and sweep round the rear upon the camp, the artillery, and the

¹ He was not, as usually stated, a farmer, but a servant of a Mr Sparks, who lived in Chedzoy. Sparks had climbed the Chedzoy church tower in the morning and had watched the royal army encamping. To avoid compromising himself, he sent his man, who knew the country well, to tell the Duke what he had seen.

baggage at the same time that the infantry broke into the front of the position. It was a desperate cast; but Monmouth had about 3500 brave, determined men. In the night all cats are grey; and the confusion of a hand-to-hand grapple, with all its hopes of surprise and panic, was the best chance left. Indeed, it was a good chance; and but for this, that, and the other, no one knows what might have come of it. Accordingly, a little after eleven o'clock the rebels set forth along the Keynsham road, and after shuffling along for about two miles wheeled to the right into the mist of the moor.¹

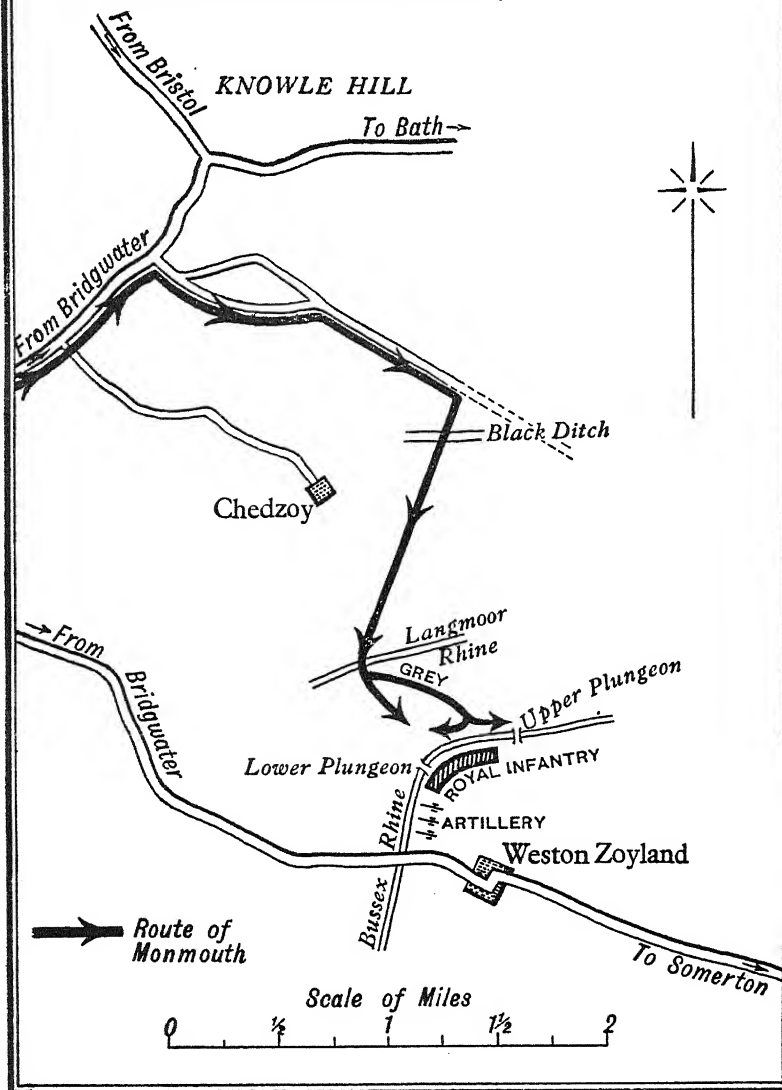
Serious charges have been levelled at Feversham by many historians. Burnet declares that Feversham "had no parties abroad, . . . got no intelligence, . . . and was abed without any care or order." It is certain he was asleep in bed when the musketry fire exploded all around. We have contemporary accounts of his heavy meals and lethargic habits. Although Churchill preserved his customary impeccable politeness, the royal officers spoke of their commander with contempt, mocking at his broken English and declaring that he only thought of eating and sleeping. Seven years before he had survived the operation, grievous in those days, of being trepanned after terrible injuries sustained in trying to limit the fire in Temple Lane by blowing up the houses. One record depicts him in the midst of the alarm methodically tying his cravat before the looking-glass of the farm in which he sheltered. In fact, however, though he omitted to post a guard on the pluncheon beyond his right flank, he had not fallen far short of ordinary military routine. He had camped in a good position; he had posted at least five strong pickets of horse and one of foot on the approaches from the enemy; he had an inlying picket of a hundred men under arms, and he had sent Oglethorpe's troop of the Blues to patrol both of the roads from Bridgwater to the north, whither he, like Churchill, expected Monmouth to attempt escape. He visited his outposts in person and waited for some time

¹ Much the best account of Sedgemoor is written by Mr Maurice Page (Bridgwater Booklets, No. 4), who by minute searching of parish registers and local inquiries has corrected in numerous minor particulars the hitherto accepted versions; and who quotes for the first time the evidence of the Rector of Chedzoy and Mr Paschall.

for Oglethorpe's report. He went to bed just before one, after receiving a message from Oglethorpe that all was quiet. Though praised and rewarded at the time, Oglethorpe has also been blamed by the critics, especially by Lord Wolseley, the most competent of all. He proceeded with his troop for some distance upon the Bridgwater road, waited a long time on a hill close to the junction of the Bristol and Bath roads, and, finding nothing in the mysterious night, pushed on to the outskirts of the town. Here he learned that the rebel army had departed. Whither he could not tell!

Meanwhile Monmouth and his men plodded onward across the moor, with Grey, guided by Godfrey, in the van. The Black Ditch, one of the great drainage ditches called 'rhines,' had been successfully crossed. Grey, with his scraggy cavalry and part of the rebel foot, were already over the second (the Langmore Rhine), and the clock of Chedzoy Church had struck one, when suddenly a vedette of the Blues fired a pistol in alarm. Frantic excitement broke out. The assailants were now very near their still sleeping foes. Contrary to most accounts, the rebels knew about the Bussex Rhine, and Grey and his horsemen, improvidently leaving Godfrey behind, rode forward, looking for the plungeon. He struck the ditch at an impassable point. Instead of working to the left in harmony with his mission to turn the flank and rear, he swerved to his right with most of his men and rode along the edge across the front of Monmouth's infantry, whose rear was still scrambling across the Langmore Rhine in the darkness behind him. Meanwhile the royal trumpets sounded, the alarm was given, the drums beat, and the threatened camp sprang in an instant into fury and confusion. The startled Grey saw through the mist a small array of gleaming lights, and moved towards them. Some say he thought they were the lights of Weston. There was a different explanation. It had not yet been possible to rearm Dumbarton's regiment with flintlocks. The lights were their slow matches burning as the troops stood to arms. "Who are you for?" cried a voice from among the matchlocks. "The King." "Which King?"

SEDGEMOOR, July 5, 1685



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“King Monmouth, God with him !” “Take that with you,” was the rejoinder, and a volley, followed at brief intervals by a second and a third as each platoon accomplished its ritual, crashed across the ditch. Grey or his untrained horses, or both, were stampeded, and scurried in complete disorder round the flanks of the infantry whom Monmouth was now leading up at the double, still in column of march. But the rest of the rebel cavalry had found the plungeon, and were only stopped at the last minute by Compton and a handful of the Blues from crossing by it.

Churchill, like Feversham, had had a long day, but he was awake, armed, equipped, and on the spot. In the absence of his chief he instantly took command. The rebels, who halted to deploy about eighty yards short of the rhine, began to fire wildly across it, while the royal regiments were rapidly forming. The danger of their bursting into the camp had been averted ; but they outflanked the royal right, and when their three cannon, under a competent Dutch gunner, began to fire at a hundred yards into the masses of Dumbarton’s regiment and the 1st Guards, men fell fast. Churchill therefore rearranged the infantry. He made the two left-hand battalions march behind the others to prolong his front to the right, and summoned the artillery. These were very slow ; but the Bishop of Winchester, ‘Old Patch,’ who accompanied Feversham as spiritual guide, took the horses out of his coach, and by these six guns were dragged successively to the critical point. Feversham now appeared upon the scene. He approved Churchill’s arrangements. He gave the extremely sensible order that the infantry were not to attempt to advance across the ditch till daylight, and rode to the left of his line.

Churchill felt the injury Monmouth’s artillery was working at such close quarters upon the infantry. It was probably by his orders that Captain Littleton, of the Blues, who were spread about the front, passed the plungeon, formed up on the other side, and just as the sky was paling with the first light of dawn charged and captured the rebel guns. He did not, as is usually stated, lead the charge of this small body himself.

Some foot soldiers from the nearest battalion waddled across and held what the cavalry had gained.

The firing had now lasted nearly three hours without the two sides being able to come to grips, and, according to Wolseley, the rebel ammunition was running short. Certainly their wagons with the reserve of powder and ball, left two miles behind, had been deserted by the teamsters in the panic of Grey's horse. Day was breaking, and the royal artillery had at length arrived. Dread and doom-like was the dawn to Monmouth. He knew, as an officer experienced in Continental warfare, that his chance had failed and nothing could now save his little army. It is amazing he did not resolve to die on the field with all these earnest simples he had drawn to their fate. But had he been capable of that, he would have been capable of so much more that all our tales would be different. Just as the full light grew upon the plain he, with Grey, who had now rejoined him after his excursion, and about fifty horsemen, rode from the field, hoping to reach a port and seize a ship. On the rising ground beyond the moor these fugitives and deserters drew rein. There, still on the edge of the fatal ditch, stood the stubborn remnants of the Nonconformist foot. The royal cavalry enveloped them or pursued their routed comrades. Fever-sham's infantry, who were able to cross the ditch everywhere without apparent difficulty, advanced upon them at the charge; but the valiant peasantry, miners, and weavers, small, devout folk serving the Lord in humble station, with the butts of their muskets and their scythes met the regulars breast to breast, and closed their ranks with invincible behaviour. At last the cannon came into action upon this lump of men. All the sixteen guns had to fire for a considerable time before it was torn to shreds and the scattered survivors fled, the prey to a merciless pursuit. Of this tragedy Monmouth had but one fleeting glance. He only knew that his followers were still resisting when he quitted the field.

We must not be drawn too far from our particular theme. Enough that the charming, handsome prince was caught—drenched and starving—in a ditch; that, carried to London, he

grovelled in vain for life at the knees of his implacable uncle ; that he repudiated the cause for which he had fought ; that he offered to turn Catholic to save not his soul, but his life ; and that finally, when these discordant sounds were ended, he died with perfect composure at the hands of a clumsy and demoralized executioner. The Lady Wentworth followed him a few months later, her heart being broken. Death can be kind.

By noon on the 6th Churchill was in Bridgwater with a thousand soldiers. Unhappy town, with its rank offences, its wounded, its mobs of prisoners or fugitives, its terrified inhabitants ! Feversham followed more slowly. He had the Continental view of war. To him these English peasants and common folk were but an unsuccessful *Jacquerie*. He had to festoon the trees with hanged men. With him was Kirke, who had the Tangier outlook, and whose soldiers, newly returned from the crusade against the Moors, bore the emblem of the Paschal Lamb. He and his Lambs showed no mercy except for cash. Worse still was to come.

It is pleasant to find that the foremost man in the fighting had no part in the aftermath of atrocities. Churchill seems to have disentangled himself from the tortured West Country with astonishing deftness. We think he hastened with the utmost speed to Sarah. There is a letter which he had written on June 30 to her at Holywell.

I have received your picture which you sent by my Lord Colchester. I do assure you that it was very welcome to me, and will be when I am alone a great satisfaction to me, for the whole world put together I do not love so well as I do you, for I swear to you I had much rather lose my own life than lose you. Therefore for my sake I recommend to you to have a care of yourself. We have had abundance of rain, which has very much tired our soldiers, which I think is ill, because it makes us not press the Duke of Monmouth so much as I think he should be, and that it will make me the longer from you, for I suppose until he be routed, I shall not have the happiness of being with you, which is most earnestly desired by me.

The rout having now been accomplished, he returned home.

The royal rewards for the victory went to Feversham ; he



THE DUKE OF MONMOUTH
Mary Beale
By permission of Lord Methuen

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received the Garter and the command of the first and most lucrative troop of the Life Guards. But nothing could free the public mind from the impression that Churchill had saved and won the battle. The whole Army knew the facts. The officers included the Household troops, the Guards, and all the most fashionable soldiers about the Court. They said what they thought. Feversham's martial achievements became a laughing-stock, and the Duke of Buckingham wrote a farce about the general who gained a battle by lying in bed.¹ No doubt there was a strong prejudice against Feversham as a Frenchman; and it may well be, as many writers now contend, that he deserved more credit than he got from his contemporaries. The impression that this slothful foreigner was slumbering on his couch and that the vigilant Englishman saved the situation had more truth in it than the popular version of many historical events.

We must suppose in our attempt to revive from these fragments of history the personality of John Churchill that his treatment by James during and after the Sedgemoor campaign crystallized their private relations. John's sagacious eye weighed with precision his claims upon the royal favour. He must also have comprehended the King's point of view as fairly as he would have measured the virtues and weaknesses of any other adversary, once classed as such. But, apart from his own course and career, there were some matters which stirred his depths. To the butcheries of the Sedgemoor battlefield succeeded the horrors of the Bloody Assize. The Lord Chief Justice Jeffreys, quick to catch his master's mood and spurred by his own sadistic passions, wreaked vengeance upon Bridgwater, Taunton, and the guilty countryside. Nearly four hundred executions marked his progress. Twelve hundred rebels were sold as slaves for the

¹ *The Battle of Sedgemoor*, Buckingham's *Works* (ed. 1775), ii, 117-124. Among other absurdities Feversham is made to say, "A pox take de Towna vid de hard Name: How you call de Towna, De Breeche? . . . Ay begarra, Breechwater; so Madama we have intelegenta dat de Rebel go to Breechwater; me say to my Mena, March you Rogua; so we marsha de greata Fielda, begar, de brava Contra where dey killa de Hare vid de Hawka, begar, de brav Sport in de Varld." The jargon shows the kind of prejudice felt by English society and the Army against foreigners, and the atmosphere around Feversham.

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Trinidad and Barbados plantations. To this day in Trinidad there exists a colony of white men who, though they have not intermarried with the negroes, toil as equals at their side. They are called the 'red-legs.' They have lost all track of their origin or family trees. Their names have perished; and few there are who know that they include the rearguard of Monmouth's army, lagging a couple of centuries behind.

A squalid traffic in slaves and pardons became fashionable at Whitehall during the Bloody Assize. "Who has not heard," exclaims Ranke, "of the maids of Taunton?" These school-girls, marshalled by their teachers, had presented Monmouth with his embroidered banner. Their well-to-do families were forced to ransom their lives. It was very profitable for a courtier or a Lady of the Bedchamber to have a maid or two allotted to them.¹ This marketing of slaves became both an open scandal and a cause of broil. The Court felt that this booty was their due. The Lord Chief Justice resented such an inroad upon his perquisites, and while he sold pardons and mitigations almost at auction, he soon made it clear by some bloody examples upon those who sued for clemency through irregular channels, that he regarded the intercessions of Whitehall as intrusions upon the sacred preserves of the Judiciary. He affirmed a principle. The law, he felt, must in such matters be independent of the Executive. The whole episode was a cannibal outburst over which King James presided with spiritual exaltation.

¹ Macaulay here fell comically into a ditch, and entirely through indulging those literary vices to which he was addicted. For one reason or another he had taken a dislike to William Penn, the Quaker leader. He treated him exactly as he treated Marlborough. By various deft turns he managed in his history to set him in an unpleasing light. He mentions, for instance, that he had attended two executions in a single day, one a hanging at Newgate and another a burning at Tyburn, and suggested that he had a taste for such spectacles; the fact being that Penn had solemnly promised both the victims to abide with them in their dying moments. The story of the Maids of Taunton seemed to furnish another opportunity for completing the portrait of William Penn in dark colours. A certain Penne had been forward in the dealings about their ransom. Macaulay lighted upon the name with glee. He speedily convinced himself it was William Penn, and wrote a scathing paragraph of history upon the shameful fact. Unluckily for 'history,' however, it was a Penne—no connexion—whose Christian name was George who undoubtedly did the dirty work. The essay in which Paget exposes this blunder (which Macaulay tried to brazen out) is in itself a fitting punishment.

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We have a glimpse of John Churchill—and of his feelings towards his master—in these times. There was the case of two youthful Baptists, the Hewlings.

Their sister, Hannah Hewling, presented a petition to the King in behalf of her brothers and was introduced for the purpose by Lord Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough. While they waited in the antechamber for admittance, standing near the mantelpiece, Lord Churchill assured her of his most hearty wishes of success to her petition, “but, madam,” said he, “I dare not flatter you with any such hopes, for that marble is as capable of feeling compassion as the King’s heart.”¹

The result justified this severe opinion. Both the Hewlings were hanged.

¹ W. Orme, *Remarkable Passages in the Life of William Kiffin*, p. 147.

CHAPTER XIII
THE ROYAL PLOT
(1685-1687)

THE swift destruction of Monmouth and Argyll, the vengeance wreaked upon their adherents, the loyalty of Parliament and the fighting forces, combined to give the King a sense of sure and overwhelming power. He began forthwith to move forward along the path of his heart's desire. He would make England a Catholic country and himself an absolute monarch. The steps which he must take to these ends would, he knew, be many and hard. Only gradually and patiently could such great designs be accomplished ; but he need no longer observe that caution or practise those deceits which had induced his accession promises. He had marched victorious through the ordeal of a double rebellion ; he had proved by terrible examples his strength and his wrath. Who would now dare resist his sovereign will ? No more for him the shifts and subterfuges to which his weak, indolent brother had been forced. Henceforward he would have Ministers who would be agents rather than counsellors ; he would have compliant Parliaments or none at all ; he would have judges who would set the royal authority above the law ; he would have a strong, disciplined army devoted to his person ; above all, he would suffer no longer that the true faith, which he himself embraced so dearly, should lie under the ban of penal laws. To free his Catholic subjects from their oppression and to raise them to offices of power and honour became for him a sacred duty.

As soon as Jeffreys' "campaign," as James called it, was ended he proposed to his Council the repeal of the Test Act and the Habeas Corpus Act, those two hated relics of Whig insurgency in the late reign. The measures taken to suppress the rebellion and the money supplied for that purpose by

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Parliament furnished him with a large increase in his Army. Eight new regiments of cavalry and twelve of infantry were formed. The whole Tangier garrison was now at home. In the emergency many Catholics had been given commissions and commands. The King was determined to retain them, and to use them and other Catholic officers in the raising of the new regiments. He wished to see the Catholic peers resume their functions in the House of Lords. Halifax, as Lord President of the Council, resisted these departures and cited the statutes which they violated. Lord Keeper North warned his master against such courses. "Although the Duke of Monmouth was gone, yet there was a Prince of Orange on the other side of the water."¹ Halifax was removed not only from the Presidency of the Council, but from his other offices and from the Privy Council altogether; and when soon North died, Chief Justice Jeffreys, furious champion of the royal prerogative, fresh from the Bloody Assize, became Lord Chancellor in his stead. Sunderland later in the year added the vacant office of Lord President to that of Secretary of State, and became henceforward James's chief Minister.

Parliament met for its second session on November 9, and the King laid his immediate purpose before the Members. The lessons of the late rebellions showed, he declared with admitted reason, the uselessness of the militia. A strong standing army was indispensable to the peace and order of the realm, and Catholic officers were needed to maintain its efficiency. He had appointed such officers during the troubles; he would not dismiss them on the morrow of their faithful services. These two demands shook that friendly Parliament to its foundations. It was deeply and predominantly imbued with the Cavalier spirit. Its most hideous nightmare was a standing army; its dearest treasure the Established Church. Parliament was thus assaulted in both its secular and religious functions. Fear and perplexity disturbed all Members, and beneath their agitation anger smouldered.

Yet no one could accuse either House of turbulence or

¹ R. North, *Lives of the Norths*, ii, 154.

precipitancy. The old loyalties, revived by recent dangers, still inspired the Tory nobles and country gentlemen. They disputed the failure of the militia, but they offered nevertheless £700,000 for the increase of the Army. Sir Winston in one of his last public appearances made a hearty appeal for such a grant. The House of Commons was even disposed to condone the breach of the Test Act committed by the Catholic officers and to remit their penalties. With profuse expressions of devotion, they asked only for reassurance that Acts of Parliament would not be permanently set aside by the prerogative, and for kind words about the security of their religion. The King answered their address sternly, and the Commons proceeded to consider the royal speech in detail. But even now when John Coke, Treasurer of the Queen Dowager's household, a man known for his loyalty, exclaimed, "We are all Englishmen and are not to be frightened out of our duty by a few high words," they clapped him in the Tower for his impropriety.

It was, indeed, the Upper House that renewed the solemn argument. They too sought to reopen debate on the King's speech, and here Devonshire, the hardy Whig; Halifax, the renowned ex-Minister; Bridgwater and Nottingham, actually members of the Privy Council; and, above all, Henry Compton, Bishop of London, asserted the rights of the nation. A day was fixed for the rediscussion of the Address, and the judges were invited to pronounce upon the lawfulness of the King's proceedings. James had not yet packed the Bench with his partisans. He saw plainly that the declaration which must now be expected from the judges and the House of Lords would constitute a massive obstacle to that very dispensing power upon which he intended to rely for the relief and preferment of the Catholics. He therefore, on November 20, suddenly appeared in the House of Lords, summoned the Commons to the Bar, and prorogued Parliament. It never met again while he was King.

Since Sedgemoor Churchill had watched impassively the King's proceedings. His position in the royal household precluded him from taking part in the debates of the Upper

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House, in which he was but a newcomer. When the Duke of Albemarle had refused to serve under the discredited Feversham in the Army, Churchill had taken the vacant post. It was not until the trial of Lord Delamere in January 1686 for complicity in Monmouth's rebellion that he was compelled to set himself publicly in opposition to his master and benefactor. The King named Judge Jeffreys Lord High Steward, and Jeffreys appointed thirty peers as Triers. "All the thirty," writes Macaulay,¹

were in politics vehemently opposed to the prisoner. Fifteen of them were colonels of regiments, and might be removed from their lucrative commands at the pleasure of the King. . . . Every Trier, beginning from the lowest, had to rise separately and to give in his verdict, on his honour, before a great concourse. That verdict, accompanied by his name, would go to every part of the world, and would live in history.

Jeffreys, of course, acted like a prosecuting attorney rather than a judge. The chief witness for the Crown was a professional informer ; but Delamere was certainly a dangerous Whig. The King took his seat in the House of Lords and glowered upon the scene. The Triers withdrew and consulted together for about half an hour. It fell to Churchill, as junior Baron among them, to speak first. He stood up, uncovered, and laying his hand upon his breast, answered, "Not guilty, upon my honour!"² The whole thirty peers followed him in acquittal. The King did not conceal his annoyance. The failure of the Crown to convict Delamere and the public relief which followed was the end of the vengeance for Monmouth's rebellion.

Freeing himself from Parliamentary opposition by repeated prorogations, King James proceeded throughout 1686 with the relief of his fellow-religionists. First he desired to dispense with the Test against Catholics in the Army. He consulted his judges on the means of achieving this. "Can I," he asked Judge Jones, who had accompanied Jeffreys on his campaign after Sedgemoor, "find twelve judges who will uphold my power to dispense with the laws?" "Your

¹ *History*, ii, 38.

² *State Trials*, ii, 593.

Majesty may find twelve judges to your mind, but hardly twelve lawyers." However, after various dismissals and appointments the Bench was packed, and a test case (the Colonel Hales case) arranged. The dispensing power was upheld by the court. Armed with this, James in May granted a dispensation to the curate of Putney, although he had become a Catholic, to continue in his benefice. At the same time Roman Catholic peers were admitted into the Privy Council. In January 1686 he set up an Ecclesiastical Commission, an instrument declared illegal by the Long Parliament, whose main function was to prevent Anglicans from preaching against Catholics. Bishop Compton had already been dismissed from the Privy Council. He was now suspended from his functions as Bishop of London.

By the end of the year James had driven away many of his most faithful friends and disquieted everybody. Halifax, who had saved him from the Exclusion Bill, was brooding in the country. Danby, only liberated from the Tower in 1684, had perforce abandoned his dream of Church and King. He saw it could never be realized with a Papist sovereign. Albemarle, son of the General Monk who had made the Restoration, had quitted the royal service in dudgeon. Bishop Compton, whose father, the Earl of Northampton, had fallen in the Civil War, who had himself been an officer of the Life Guards, was in strident opposition. The loyal Parliament which had rallied to James against Monmouth and Argyll could be brought together no more without the certainty of quarrel. Its lords and squires sat sullen and anxious in their homes amid their tenantry. The Church, the bulwark of Legitimacy, seethed with suppressed alarms, and only the powerful influence of Rochester upon the bishops and clergy prevented a vehement outburst. Soon the two Hydes, both Rochester and Clarendon, were to be chased from the King's side.

In those days the King was the actual head of the executive Government; he chose his own Ministers and settled his own policy. There was no recognized right of opposition to the Government. James had now made it clear that he would only be advised by Ministers who whole-heartedly accepted

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his view. If statesmen could not see their way to serve the King as he wished to be served, they had no expectation of ever being called again to public service. Indeed, the distinction was very nice between opposition and treason. What, then, was to be done? It was plain that the King, with all the downright resolution of his nature, was actively and of set purpose subverting the faith and Constitution of the country, contrary to all he had promised and to its inflexible resolve. For a space many endured in silence. The Whigs, though outraged, were in eclipse. The Tories, almost equally distressed, were wrapped up in the Church of England. One of the cardinal doctrines of that Church since the Restoration had been non-resistance to the royal power. With infinite imprudence the King wore away this security.

While, during the whole of 1686 and 1687, James held Parliament in abeyance, and used his dispensing power to introduce Roman Catholics into the various high offices, military and civil, Whigs and Tories drew closer together. The glaring differences which had sundered them in the last reign faded before their growing common peril. James could not fail to see that he was uniting the party that had challenged his brother and the party which had rallied so ardently to his brother's defence. He felt himself in presence of the silent hostility of all those forces which had brought about the Restoration and on which his own throne was based. He now embarked upon a political manœuvre which was at once audacious, crafty, and miscalculated. Hitherto he had striven only to relieve his Catholic subjects. He would now bid for the aid of the Dissenters, who lay equally under the ban of penal laws. He would unite the flanks of politics against the centre, and lead the old Roman Catholic nobility and gentry to make common cause with Puritans and Roundheads. All those who suffered for their faith through the hard laws demanded by the majority of the nation should band themselves together behind him in the name of religious toleration. The chapels and conventicles should find in him their champion against the Established Church. If Whigs

and Tories were combined, he would match them by a coalition of Papists and Nonconformists under the armed power of the Crown. Nay, he would not reject even the dim, stubborn masses who had swarmed to Monmouth's standards in the West, or had awaited him elsewhere, whose faith was the very antithesis of his own, and whose fathers had cut off his father's head. With these at his back, he would teach the Church of England, the Cavaliers, and those froward Whigs their duty. In William Penn, the Quaker courtier, influential in both this and the former reign, he found a powerful, skilful agent. Here, then, was the King of England breaking down the natural pillars of his throne and seeking to shore it up with novel, ill-assorted, inadequate props.

This strange departure produced its reaction upon foreign policy. James, although anxious for French money, was by no means disposed to be the vassal of the French King. He admired and wished to imitate the French systems of government both in Church and State, but he was resentful of any slur upon the independence of his realm. During 1685 and 1686 Louis XIV found serious cause for anxiety in the attitude of his royal brother. Although James enthusiastically hailed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he had protested against the persecution loosed upon the small principality of Orange, from which William had sprung. The prompt and loyal, if interested, assistance which William had rendered during Monmouth's rebellion had created a friendly feeling between the English and Dutch Courts. A cordial correspondence was maintained between James and his son-in-law. Now that he was relying upon the Nonconformists at home James was inclined to unite himself, for his supreme purpose of making England Catholic, with the champion of the Protestant faith abroad. William Penn was sent to Holland to help persuade the Prince of Orange to agree to a plan whereby England would support the Dutch against the French, if William of Orange would help James in carrying a Declaration of Indulgence for English Catholics and Dissenters.

These were the politics of paradox. They broke upon the

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rock of William's farsighted self-interest. His connexions with England were strengthened and multiplied every day. His chest was filled with complaining letters from Whig and Tory magnates. He knew what an improvident exchange James was making in driving away the old traditional friends of the English monarchy, and seeking in their stead to found himself upon elements saturated with a conception of limited monarchy then deemed republicanism. He would not try to build upon a threatened authority. Vital to the Protestant cause as was the alliance with England, William would not seek it through such doubtful agency. He looked behind the gimcrack politics of the King to the rising anger of the nation, and kept the path clear for his own ambitions. He therefore declined to support or approve the Declaration of Indulgence.

William was already in close touch with Halifax. The Great Trimmer felt intensely the new list of the ship, and leaned all the weight of his sagacity and influence to counter it. "I do not find the measures now taken," he wrote in a letter of July 20, 1686,

are such as would encourage a man to be a gamester, after he hath been turned out for a Wrangler; except one could divest oneself of those foolish things called principles, which I find the meaner sort of man uses like their clothes and make them willing to the fashion whatever it is; which is a pitch of understanding I am not yet come up to, and consequently am too dull to meddle with so nimble a trade as those whose politics grow of late in the world [a reference to Sunderland]. I am too slow a beast to keep pace with them now that they are upon the gallop. The four new Privy Councillors [all Catholics], the Commission of Supremacy [the Ecclesiastical Commission] and several other things set up included in them give a pretty fair prospect of what is reasonable to be expected.¹

Thus Halifax!

In January 1687 came the fall of the Hydes. For a long time both had been unhappy in their offices. Clarendon in Ireland had been overawed by Tyrconnel; Rochester at

¹ Foxcroft, *Halifax*, i, 466.

Whitehall by Sunderland. In June 1686 Rochester had tried to wean James back to moderation through the influence of Catharine Sedley, the Duke of York's Protestant mistress in former days. For a space Catharine's influence seemed strong. She was created Countess of Dorchester. But the exertions of the King's confessor, and the just indignation of the Queen, soon recalled James to orthodox faith and marital propriety. Rochester bore the blame alike of the intrigue and of its failure. The reader will remember Hyde's attempts in 1681 to persuade James to conform to Protestantism. Now the rôles and objects were reversed. From October 1686 onwards James had been trying to convert his younger brother-in-law to the Roman faith. Rochester was very fond of office and made much money out of it. But at length he realized that the alternative before him was to quit the Treasurership or become a Catholic. Forthwith he set himself to make his case before the Anglican Church, so that all could see a public ground of quarrel. He consented to hear priestly arguments for his conversion to Rome, and after duly considering them announced that he was only the more confirmed in the Protestant faith. Indeed, he had been for some time so perturbed by the danger to Protestantism in Europe that, High Churchman as he was, he thought, like Halifax, that all the Protestant sects should now draw together for common defence.

Sunderland had expressed to the King his fears that Rochester would let himself be converted in order to cling to his office. The King knew better : but in the upshot he was no less vexed at Rochester's obduracy as a Protestant than pleased at getting rid of him as a Minister. On January 7, 1687, Rochester was dismissed from the Treasury, and three days later Clarendon in Ireland was replaced by Tyrconnel. The friend of the Hydes, Queensberry, had already been recalled from his Commissionership in Scotland, and was superseded by two Catholics; Perth and Melfort, of whom more later. These changes marked another definite stage in the reign of James II. The prorogation of Parliament at the end of 1685 had been the beginning of Cavalier and Anglican dis-

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content against the Crown. With the dismissal of Rochester began the revolutionary conspiracy.

Meanwhile James was raising and preparing his army. Charles II's forces of about seven thousand men had cost £280,000 a year. Already James was spending £600,000 upon the upkeep of more than twenty thousand men. Three troops of Life Guards,¹ the Blues, ten regiments of horse or dragoons, two of foot-guards, and fifteen of the line, besides garrison troops, were under arms by February 1686. Every summer a great camp was formed at Hounslow to impress the Londoners. In August 1685 this contained about ten thousand men. A year later Feversham could assemble fifteen thousand men and twenty-eight guns. The King went often to the camp, seeking to make himself popular with the officers and all ranks. He had Mass celebrated in a wooden chapel borne on wheels and placed in the centre of the camp between the horse and foot. He watched the drill of the troops and dined with Feversham, Churchill, and other generals. He continued his infusion of Catholic officers and Irish recruits. He had a parson, Johnson, pilloried and whipped from Newgate to Tyburn for a seditious pamphlet addressed to Protestant soldiers. He comforted himself with the aspect of this formidable army, the like of which had not been seen since Cromwell, and against which nothing could be matched in England. He increasingly promoted Catholics to key posts. Arabella's son, the Duke of Berwick, now eighteen years old, was made governor of Portsmouth; and Catholics commanded at both Hull and Dover. At midsummer 1688 a Catholic admiral ruled the Channel Fleet.

Soon after the dismissal of the Hydes William sent over to England a trusted envoy. Dykevelt, a Dutchman of the highest character and standing, arrived in London partly to exhibit the Prince of Orange as pleading with James to moderate his measures, and partly to enter into communication with the Opposition leaders. Dykevelt warned James almost as an ultimatum that neither William nor Mary, should they succeed to the Crown, would maintain any of his Romanizing

¹ Each equal almost to a regiment.

policy. Even if the Test Act were repealed they would re-enact it, and would reign in association with the Church of England and the Parliamentary system. The King, in his irritation at this interference in his affairs, may have overlooked the fact that the Prince of Orange was at the same time presenting a rival political programme to his subjects. Dykevelt saw all the statesmen opposed to the Court; he received their views and assurances, and at the same time made it clear that they could count upon William and Mary for support in their struggle and protection in their distress.

For some months past the King and the Catholic party had been toying with a plan for declaring Princess Anne next in succession to the Crown, on condition that she would turn Catholic. Such designs, if they were ever seriously intended, or their mere rumour, threw the Cockpit into the most violent internal commotion. Here the Protestant circle had become close and tight. Princess Anne was convulsed with fear and anger at the suggestion that her faith would be tampered with, and roused herself quite sincerely to a mood of martyrdom. Taught and fortified by Bishop Compton, dwelling in intense intimacy with her beloved Sarah, guided through her as well as directly by John Churchill, she now embarked with her husband upon real antagonism to her father.

As early as December 29, 1686, before Dykevelt's arrival, she had written to her sister Mary about her friend Lord Churchill. "I believe," she said, "that he will always obey the King in all things that are consistent with religion—yet rather than change that, I daresay he will lose all his places and all that he has." In February she sought, no doubt upon the advice of the Churchills, permission to visit her sister at The Hague. Barillon was much concerned at this suggestion, the objections to which he readily perceived. "The Princess Anne has strongly pressed the King to allow her to go, but he has bluntly refused!" On March 14 he reports that Anne

has been worked up with the plan of going to Holland under the pretext of meeting her sister. Once she was there she would have been prevented from coming back and the Protestant party

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would have been fortified by the union of these two princesses, the lawful heirs to the Crown, who could have made declarations and protestations against the whole Catholic movement. King James was not without suspicion that Churchill had his share in proposing such a journey and that his wife, the Princess Anne's favourite, had awakened her ambition.¹

Even Rochester and his wife were suspected of being favourable. "There could be no doubt that Dykevelt had encouraged the Protestant cabals." "The Bishop of Wells had preached against the Government in Anne's presence." And again on April 3: "Princess Anne openly shows her zeal for the Protestant religion and has been *incognita* to various churches to hear popular preachers. The King still hopes to convert her to Catholicism."

A letter of Anne's to her sister Mary reveals her position with startling clarity. Dalrymple has printed it in an abridged and mutilated form from the Carte manuscripts. He omits three interesting passages and misdates it by a year, thereby misleading the whole string of historians who have transcribed him unquestioningly. The Spencer Papers contain a copy which, since it illuminates the position of Anne and the Churchills, deserves to be printed here, for the first time, in its integrity.²

YE COCKPIT

March 13th [1687]

This letter going by sure hands I will now venture to write my mind very freely to you, and in the first place must tell you, that the satisfaction I proposed to myself of seeing you this spring has been denied me, which has been no small trouble to me as you may easily imagine: and the disappointment has been the greater because the King gave me leave when I first asked it; for the night I came from Richmond, I desired him to give the Prince leave to go into Denmark, and me to go into Holland, which he granted immediately without any difficulty, but in a few days after, he told me I must not go. So that 'tis plain he has spoke of it to some body that persuaded him against it, and 'tis as certain that that body was Lord Sunderland, for the King trusts him with everything; and he going on so fiercely for the interest of the

¹ *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 161, f. 172.

² The passages omitted by Dalrymple are printed in italics.

Papists, is afraid you should be told a true character of him and this I really believe is the reason why I was refus'd coming to you, tho' may be, he and the Priests together give other reasons to the King therefore since I am not to see my dear Sister. . . .

You may remember I have once before ventured to tell you, that I thought Lord Sunderland a very ill man, and I am more confirmed every day in that opinion. Everybody knows how often this man turned backwards and forwards in the late King's time ; and now, to complete all his virtues, he is working with all his might to bring in Popery. He is perpetually with the priests, and stirs up the King to do things faster than I believe he would of himself. Things are come to that pass now, that, if they go on so much longer, I believe in a little while, no Protestant will be able to live here.

The King has never said a word to me about religion since the time I told you of ; but I expect it every minute, and am resolved to undergo anything rather than change my religion. Nay, if it should come to such extremities, I will chuse to live on alms rather than change.

This worthy Lord does not go publicly to mass, but hears it privately at a priest's chamber, and never lets anybody be there, but a servant of his.

His lady too, is as extraordinary in her kind ; for she is a flattering, dissembling, false woman ; but she has so fawning and endearing a way, that she will deceive any body at first, and it is not possible to find out all her ways in a little time. She cares not at what rate she lives, but never pays any body. She will cheat, though it be for a little. Then she has had her gallants, though may be not so many as some ladies here ; and with all these good qualities she is a constant church woman ; so that to outward appearance one would take her for a saint, and to hear her talk, you would think she was a very good Protestant ; but she is as much one as the other ; for it is certain that her Lord does nothing without her.

By what I have said you may judge what good hands the King and Kingdom are in, and what an uneasy thing it is to all good honest people, that they must seem to live civilly with this Lord and his Lady. I had not your letter by Mr Dykevelt till last week, but I have never ventured to speak to him, because I am not used to speak to people about business and this Lord is so much upon the watch that I am afraid of him. So I have desired Lord Churchill (who is one that I can trust, and I am sure

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is a very honest man and a good Protestant) to speak to Mr Dykevelt for me, to know what it is he has to say to me, and by the next opportunity I will answer it, for one dares not write anything by the post!

One thing there is, which I forgot to tell you, about this noble Lord [Sunderland] which is, that it is thought, if every thing does not go as he would have it, that he will pick a quarrel with the court, and so retire, and by that means it is possible he will think he makes his court to you.¹

There is one thing about yourself which I cannot help giving my opinion in, which is, that if the King should desire you and the Prince of Orange to come over to make him a visit, I think it would be better (if you can make any handsome excuse) not to do it; for though I dare swear the King could have no thought against either of you, yet since people can say one thing, and do another, one cannot help being afraid; if either of you should come, I should be very glad to see you; but really if you or the Prince should come, I should be frightened out of my wits for fear any harm should happen to either of you!

Pray don't let any body see this, nor don't speak of it: pray let me desire you not to take notice of what I have said to any body except the Prince of Orange; for 'tis all treason that I have spoke, and the King commanded me not to say [to] any that I once thought of coming into Holland; and I fear if he should know that it was no secret, he would be angry with me, therefore as soon as you have read this, pray burn it; for I would not that anybody but the Prince of Orange and yourself should know what I have said. When I have another opportunity 'tis possible that I may have more to say, but for this time having writ so much already, I hope you will forgive me for saying no more now, but that no tongue can ever express how much my heart is yours.

We can see plainly from this letter the deadly breach which had already opened between Anne and her father. Though she rejects, after raising it, the idea that James would be a party to assassination, she warns her sister of the risks which William would incur by paying a visit to the English Court. She believes Sunderland capable of any villainy. There is no doubt that, with her simple faith and courage, she would have let herself be led to death rather than to Rome. In many humbler homes such fears and resolves now dominated daily life.

¹ This prediction should not pass unnoticed as the story unfolds.

MARLBOROUGH

At Anne's desire Churchill held his conversation on her behalf with Dykevelt. He is not responsible for her vapourings to her sister, but the letter which he wrote to William eight days after the envoy's departure represented, even at this early date, a final decision. It could not well have been expressed in plainer terms.

May 17, 1687

The Princess of Denmark having ordered me to discourse with Monsieur Dykevelt, and to let him know her resolutions, so that he might let your highness and the princess her sister know that she was resolved, by the assistance of God, to suffer all extremities, even to death itself, rather than be brought to change her religion, I thought it my duty to your highness and the princess royal, by this opportunity of Monsieur Dykevelt, to give you assurances under my own hand, that my places and the King's favour I set at nought, in comparison of being true to my religion. In all things but this the King may command me ; and I call God to witness, that even with joy I should expose my life for his service, so sensible am I of his favours. I know the troubling you, sir, with thus much of myself, I being of so little use to your highness, is very impertinent, but I think it may be a great ease to your highness and the princess to be satisfied that the Princess of Denmark is safe in the trusting of me ; I being resolved, although I cannot live the life of a saint, if there be ever occasion for it, to show the resolution of a martyr.

Dykevelt received similar assurances from Danby, Nottingham, Halifax, Devonshire, Russell, and others. He saw at the same time that there was no danger of the King spoiling William's chances by mending his ways. He returned to The Hague and told his many tales to William. The future Bishop Burnet, once intimate in the councils of the English Court, was already there, independently confirming Dykevelt's accounts. From this time forward our domestic tension was definitely connected with William of Orange, and he, in fact, became the head of the revolution plot.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NATIONAL COUNTER-PLOT

(1687-1688)

IN the autumn of 1687 the King made a royal progress in the West of England. Churchill accompanied him. They traversed many of the districts which two years before had been aflame for Monmouth. But the resolve of the King to extend liberty of conscience to the Nonconformists, although it was but a help for his Catholic policy, had raised hopes which for the moment almost effaced the memories of the Bloody Assize. The Catholic King received a passable welcome from the ultra-Protestants whose relations he had lately slaughtered or sold into slavery. 'Liberty of conscience' and the removal of the penal laws were war-cries which drowned even the screams and lamentations of the hideous yesterday. James felt that, with his Army dominated by Irish soldiers and Catholic officers and allied to the Dissenting masses of the Cromwellian tradition, he could afford to brave the wrath of the old, devoted friends of his house, of his line, of his person. Vain hope! Frightful miscalculation! At the best a desperate enterprise! At the least the lists were set for a destructive civil war. But was it not his duty, if need be, to tear his realm to pieces for his soul's salvation and the glory of God? Thus this melancholy zealot persevered along the road to his own ruin.

On this same progress in the West the King touched about five thousand people for the King's Evil, and at Winchester was attended in the ceremony by Catholic priests. The anonymous author of *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals* reports at length the conversation between Churchill and the King on this occasion. This book is our only authority, but it is the earliest of all Churchill's biographies and has been

accepted by most historians. The colloquy has obviously been embroidered ; it was almost certainly not invented.

In the Deanery garden at Winchester before dinner the King asked Churchill what people thought "about the method I have taken of performing the ceremony of touching in their churches." "Why, truly," he replied, "they show very little liking to it ; and it is the general voice of your people that your Majesty is paving the way for the introduction of Popery." "How !" exclaimed the King, in anger. "Have I not given them my royal word, and will they not believe their King ? I have given liberty of conscience to others ; I was always of the opinion that toleration was necessary for all Christian people, and most certainly I will not be abridged of that liberty myself, nor suffer those of my own religion to be deprived of paying their devotions to God in their own way." "What I spoke, sir," said Churchill, "proceeded purely from my zeal for your Majesty's service, which I prefer above all things next to that of God, and I humbly beseech your Majesty to believe no subject in all your three kingdoms would venture further than I would to purchase your favour and good liking ; but I have been bred a Protestant, and intend to live and die in that communion ; above nine parts in ten of the whole people are of the same persuasion, and I fear (which excess of duty makes me say) from the genius of the English nation, and their natural aversion to the Roman Catholic worship, some consequences which I dare not so much as name, and which it creates in me a horror to think of." The King listened attentively to what, from anyone else, he would have warmly resented, and then said deliberately, "I tell you, Churchill, I will exercise my own religion in such a manner as I shall think fitting. I will show favour to my Catholic subjects, and be a common father to all my Protestants of what religion soever : but I am to remember that I am King, and to be obeyed by them. As for the consequences, I shall leave them to Providence, and make use of the power God has put in my hands to prevent anything that shall be injurious to my honour, or derogatory to the duty that is owing to me." The King then turned

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away with a stern look and would speak to Churchill no more that night. "He went to dinner, during which his discourse to the Dean of Winchester, Dr Maggot, who stood next to his chair, was altogether about Passive Obedience. I myself," says the author, "was a stander by and heard it; without knowing the occasion of it at that time, till the Lord Churchill told me what words had happened between the King and him."¹

The provocations of the royal policy constantly increased. The publication of Dryden's *The Hind and the Panther* offers their poetical justification. In April 1687 the King, dispensing with the law by his prerogative, issued his first Declaration of Indulgence. The spring saw his attempt to force a Catholic President upon Magdalen College, Oxford, and the expulsion of the Fellows for their resistance. In July James planned the public reception of the Papal nuncio, d'Adda. The Duke of Somerset when commanded to conduct the ceremonial objected on the ground that the recognition of Papal officials had been declared illegal at the Reformation. "I am above the law," said James. "Your Majesty is so," was the reply, "but I am not." He was at once dismissed from all his offices.

The King had, in modern parlance and now familiar style, set up his political platform. The second step was to create a party machine, and the third to secure by its agency a Parliament with a mandate for the repeal of the Tests. The narrow franchise could be manipulated to a very large extent by the Lord-Lieutenants of counties, by the magistrates, and in the towns and cities by the corporations. Upon these, therefore, the royal energies were now directed. The Lord-Lieutenants, including many of the greatest territorial magnates, who refused to help pack a favourable Parliament, were dismissed, and Catholics or faithful nominees of the Court installed in their place. The municipal corporations and the benches of magistrates were drastically remodelled so as to secure the fullest representation, or even the preponderance,

¹ *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*, pp. 19-21. The conversation has been changed from reported into direct speech.

of Papists and Dissenters. The Government tried to extort from all candidates a pledge to vote for the King's policy.

These measures implied a complete political and social transformation. The nobility and the country gentlemen were outraged by being either turned out of their local dignities or made to receive representatives of the hitherto depressed classes as colleagues. The quarter-sessions and the municipal corporations were the only forms of local government which the people knew. The Lord-Lieutenants were the visible executive instruments of the royal authority. In every one of these bodies and functions the ferment and irritation of change grew. The process of setting Papists and Dissenters over, or in place of, Anglicans and Cavaliers must rupture and recast the whole social structure of English life. The purpose, character, and scope of these measures were profoundly comprehended in that incredibly rigid society from the proudest, wealthiest nobles down to the mass of the common people in town and village. The simples, like the gentles, feared the Pope, hated the French, and pitied the Huguenot refugees. They too, though voteless, counted. Their superiors could not be insensible to an atmosphere of ardour and goodwill around them. The spirit of the people found its own paths of influence. Psychic forces do not require the ballot-box. A recent Catholic writer¹ has portrayed the opposition to James as the resistance of the rich and powerful. This is true. It was successful because the rich and powerful championed the causes and prejudices which the masses espoused, but without superior leadership were unable to defend.

The six English and Scots regiments in Dutch pay and service which had been sent over to resist Monmouth had all returned to Holland. James and his Ministers became apprehensive lest this fine body of men should some day pay them another and less friendly visit. For some months in 1687 James and Louis were trying to arrange for the transfer of these regiments from the Dutch service to the French. Churchill seems to have used all his personal influence—such

¹ Mr Hilaire Belloc, *James II* (1928).

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as it then was—with James to prevent their departure from Holland, and to obtain the command of them in Holland for himself. Sunderland told Barillon on November 3, 1687:

I believe this proposal will be accepted and that it would have been done already had not Lord Churchill taken great trouble for a long time to represent to His Majesty how advantageous it would be to him to have a body of his subjects maintained in Holland. Lord Churchill's aim was to be in command of this force. But he will find himself disappointed as this regiment [*sic*] is already destined for the Duke of Berwick, and in any case a Catholic commander would have been appointed, an officer of experience with the title of Colonel. . . .¹

Churchill's desire for the appointment, the significance of which is apparent, was, as Sunderland foresaw, frustrated. But the troops stayed in Holland. William and the States-General, for reasons becoming increasingly obvious, refused point-blank to let them go. An acute tension arose between the two Governments. Their fundamental differences were exposed, and for the first time war was felt to be in the air.

Among the notables who now fell under the royal displeasure was Lord Scarsdale, the Lord-Lieutenant of Derbyshire. As First Gentleman-in-Waiting to Prince George of Denmark, he was one of the Cockpit group. He refused to obey the King's orders to rig the impending election, and the Prince and Princess sent Churchill to ask the King what he wished them to do in the matter. James preferred not to give them any instructions. "I leave the decision," he said, "to your sense of duty." On this they did nothing, and the King was then prevailed upon by his Ministers to order them to dismiss Scarsdale. They refused to do so. The Churchills went to the country to avoid becoming embroiled in so delicate a dispute among their superiors, and being held responsible for the conduct of Princess Anne, who ruled her husband as completely as she herself was guided by Sarah. Barillon notes upon this incident that Lord Churchill seemed to be losing favour every day. He added that Churchill had hoped to get the

¹ *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 162, ff. 267 verso, 268.

command of the regiment which was to be maintained—and here his notes were surely only partly correct—*by the French*,¹ as he had thought “that employment would be very useful,” besides believing that by it he “would get out of the constant difficulties he was in at home.” Churchill, he said, had not been informed of the definite agreement about the regiment.²

An order of the Duke of Berwick that thirty Irish Catholics should be enlisted in the 8th Regiment of the Line provoked mutinous complaint. The Lieutenant-Colonel and five captains protested. They declared that they had raised the regiment at their own charges to defend the Crown in time of danger. They had no difficulty in maintaining its strength with English recruits. They threatened to lay down their commissions if these “strangers” were forced upon them. Tried by a council of war, they were cashiered. Clarke’s *Life of King James II* says that “Churchill moved the court to sentence the six officers to death.” Macaulay could not attempt to make his readers swallow this. Such a punishment was, in any case, beyond the competence of a court-martial in time of peace. Had he endorsed the story he would have been exposed at once. He therefore decided, after his usual method, to make it serve as a proof of his impartiality and love of truth, and thereby to lay the foundations of some more damaging and less easily disprovable libel later on. In recording this story he describes it as “one of the thousand fictions invented at Saint-Germains for the purpose of blackening a character which was black enough without such daubing.” This once more reveals his principle: in blackening this man there must be no daubing. The purpose was meritorious, but the execution must be artistic.

The defenders of James’s conduct are concerned to exaggerate the number of English Catholics. It is even claimed that one-eighth of the population still adhered, in spite of generations of persecution, to the Old Faith. Accord-

¹ Author’s italics.

² *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 162, ff. 335 seq.

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ing to a return of 1689, there were then only 13,856 Catholics in the whole country, or less than one in four hundred of the people.¹ The royal attempt to make a remarkable political spectacle of these few thousands of Papists, advanced to the headship of local and national affairs, even though supported by the Dissenters, was bound to range all the dominant national forces, incomparably stronger, against the Crown. The Pope, in accordance with the policy of the Holy See, which the next chapter will explain, deprecated James's excessive zeal, and his legate in England urged caution and prudence. The old Catholic families in England, apart from individuals advanced to high office, were, as Ailesbury's *Memoirs* show, deeply apprehensive of the headlong adventure upon which the King was launching them. They felt this sudden disproportionate favour was far from being in their true interests, and would only bring upon them the wrath and frightful passions which were being raised all about them. Still the King hardened his heart and strengthened his Army.

The most continuous chronicle of these days is found in Barillon's despatches to Louis XIV.² The experienced Ambassador who had long lain in the centre of fashion and affairs and had been confidant and paymaster of the King, the Court, and most of the leading politicians, had unmatched opportunities of knowing and judging the British scene. As early as December 24, 1685, he reports that James is expected to abandon the Episcopal for the Nonconformist party. On January 7 he conveys to Louis James's reaction upon the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. "The King of England realizes to his core that nothing is so great or so salutary as the task which your Majesty has undertaken." On the 14th, "The King has prorogued Parliament and hopes to dissolve it and obtain a Parliament of Nonconformists." On the 21st he writes of the Catharine Sedley intrigue, "She has been given a title and Duchess of Portsmouth's appointments. In London this is taken as anti-Catholic demonstration."

¹ Dalrymple, ii, 2, 41-42.

² *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 161-165, *passim*.

By the 25th the King has been brought back to the fold. "The King," says the Ambassador, "promises he will not see Sedley again. He loves his wife. *Elle est Italienne et fort glorieuse !*" On the 28th he observes, "Liberty of conscience can only be established by a Nonconformist Parliament. In conjunction with this an Irish army will play its part. It is being filled with Catholic officers." On February 19, "Permission has been given for Catholic books to be printed. The King is holding to his course in spite of a Court cabal which urges him to summon Parliament." On March 25 :

The King has spoken to me with great confidence of all his designs which are directed principally to the advantage of the Catholic religion which he believes your Majesty has equally at heart, having worked with so much success for the destruction of heresy in France.

"And," he adds, "The Catholic party is on top." May 27 : "The troops are in camp at Hounslow." June 21 : James has told him that things are not going as well as he hoped. There is a cabal against him. Murray, the Scottish Commissioner, has found proofs of a secret correspondence between the Prince of Orange and the Scots. June 24 : "The King is anxious to punish anti-Catholic preachers and for this purpose has set up an Ecclesiastical Commission." August 12 : "The Bishop of London refuses to recognize this jurisdiction." On September 13, "It is decided not to call Parliament until the following year." October 13 : "James has sent priests to Jersey and Guernsey to convert the Protestants." December 23 : "Rochester prefers to quit the Treasury rather than become a Catholic." December 30 : "The King has told the Ambassador that the Treasurer must be a man in sympathy with his own ideals, and as Rochester was not, the Treasury would be put in commission." James tells the Ambassador that "Rochester favoured Calvinists." But he reports on January 13, 1687, that "Rochester's dismissal causes great consternation at Court : all fear for their posts." In February comes his first mention of Dykevelt's visit. Dykevelt is expected to concert *avec les Milords Protestants*.

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It would be difficult to rival this continuous selection of significant events. Well may Charles James Fox call Barillon's letters "worth their weight in gold."

For many months, however, there was still parley. The parsons preached against Popery. Statesmen and divines exerted themselves by the dispersal of pamphlets throughout the country to offset James's attempt to rally the Nonconformists. Halifax issued his cogent *Letter to a Dissenter*. Burnet wrote from The Hague appealing to the Anglicans to stand steadfastly against the King's policy, despite their doctrine of non-resistance; and Fagel, the Dutch greffier,¹ sent a letter, widely circulated in England, which was understood to represent the similar sentiments of William of Orange.

Churchill had, as we have seen, entered fully into all the movements of protest against the royal policy. In December 1686 Anne had written to Mary assuring her of the strong Anglicanism of the Churchills. Her letter, already noticed, in the spring of 1687 had followed. In March Churchill had conversed with Dykevelt. In May he wrote to William. In September took place his remarkable conversation with James at Winchester. In November he tried to get the command of the English regiments in the Dutch service, and so escape from the net which was closing round him at home. In December he supported and animated Anne in her endeavour to retain in her service Lord Scarsdale despite his refusal, as Lord-Lieutenant of Derbyshire, to obey James's orders. Finally, in January 1688 Churchill told James directly that he would not himself support the repeal of the penal Tests. A contemporary letter of January 12 states, "Lord Churchill swears he will not do what the King requires of him."²

No man in all the stately company that represented the national character in these crucial days had made his opinion more plain, but James continued to rely on the intimacies and fidelities of twenty years of service on one hand and his benefactions on the other. He could not realize the truth that personal gratitude could never weigh in any great mind

¹ A high Dutch office corresponding to our Clerk of Parliaments.

² Johnstone's letters, *cit.* J. Mackintosh, *History of the Revolution*, pp. 197-198.

against the issues now presented to Englishmen. He knew Churchill loathed his policy, but fondly believed he loved his person more. At the crunch he was sure he could count on his influence, his diplomacy, and his sword. Meanwhile master and servant dwelt in all their old familiarity, and Churchill was constantly at the King's side in his bedroom, at his toilet, behind his chair at meals, and on horseback beside his carriage, just as he had been since he was a page.

How did this prolonged situation, with its many delicate, repugnant, and irreconcilable features, affect his inner mind? Was he distressed or was he indifferent about his personal relations with the King? On the surface he showed no trace of embarrassment. He possessed to a degree almost sublime the prosaic gift of common sense. His sure judgment and serene, dispassionate nature enabled him, amid the most baffling problems of interest and duty, to dwell inwardly and secretly at peace with his gravely taken decisions; and, of course, without further self-questionings to take in due season all measures necessary to render them effectual. The personalities which warm our hearts often cast much away from sentiment or compunction. Not so this man. He made up his mind with cold, humane sagacity, and a profound weighing of all the largest and smallest circumstances: and thenceforward he faced obloquy, if it were inevitable, as calmly as the ordinary chances of battle, after all had been done to prepare victory with the least loss of life. From the beginning of 1686 onward he was resolved to resist his master's designs. He saw in the Prince of Orange the agent who alone could bring in the indispensable armed power. He made his choice, if the worst should happen, to quit James and join William. He saw that the importance of his part in such a conflict would be measured by his influence over the Princess Anne and by his authority in the Army. If the hour of action should strike, he meant to use both potent factors to achieve, as smoothly and reasonably as possible, the public purpose and success of the course he had chosen.

In modern times such decisions would not be required.

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An officer or a courtier could resign his employments, retire to the country, and await events or the process of public reaction to his sacrifices. But for Churchill to leave the Court, to resign his command in the Army, would not merely have meant exclusion from all forms of public service and from all share in the impending crisis. No one who had been so close to the sovereign could, while he was in the full flush of manly activity and acquainted with so many secrets, retire without incurring the gravest suspicions. Instead of dwelling at Holywell with his family, he would probably have found himself in the Tower. He could, no doubt, have attempted to leave the kingdom and follow the long string of refugees and exiles who gathered in the Netherlands. But a simple flight like this would have been only to abandon simultaneously his King and his country; at once to desert the cause of Protestantism and to leave the Princess Anne, who had hitherto followed his guidance and depended so much upon him, in complete isolation.

He had certainly made two definite attempts to quit the Court under conditions which would not have entirely divested him of power, and thus to end a personal connexion with James already become false and painful. If Princess Anne had been allowed to go to The Hague, as he had planned, he and Sarah would certainly have gone with her. If he had obtained command of the British troops in Holland he would have been at William's side and in a position to exert an influence upon events. These courses had been barred: and, apart from reducing himself to a cipher and destroying all his means of service to causes which profoundly stirred him, there was nothing left but to remain and face all the dangers and peculiar reproaches of his station. All he could give the King was the faithful declaration of his opinion, and this on many occasions he made abundantly clear. If James, knowing his mind, employed him, it was at his own risk.

It was remarkable, indeed, that the King still kept Churchill about him. He made it plain to all his intimates that those who sought his favour, or still more his friendship, must

embrace his faith. Many of his personal attendants yielded to the glamour of the royal smile or the fear of the royal frown. Salisbury, Melfort, Lorne, and many others thought that office was well worth a Mass. And no one needed official employment more than Churchill. He had no spacious estates in which to dwell, he lived only in the Court, at the head of his regiment, or with the prince he served; but to all attempts upon his faith he remained obdurate. He watched with silent disgust Sunderland, with whom he had many relationships and was to have more, take the plunge. The chief Minister of England, with all his wealth and high birth, bare-headed and bare-footed, knelt in his shirt and knocked humbly at the door of the confessional. Churchill had only to imitate him to be the King's right arm, captain of his host, his long-cherished friend.

He never seems to have had the slightest trouble in rejecting such possibilities. Of course, he was a devout and lifelong Anglican Protestant. Even Macaulay is forced to admit that "he believed implicitly in the religion he had learned as a boy." But we doubt if his choice, as his apologists contend, was made only upon religious grounds. He had a political opinion too. He knew England, and measured with superior accuracy the force of the passions now rising throughout the land. All the great men whose friendship he enjoyed, Halifax, Shrewsbury, Rochester, were moving in the one direction. On that same course he had launched the Princess Anne. Never mind the army at Hounslow! There would—at the worst—be two opposite factions there, and beyond the seas there was the Prince of Orange with trustworthy troops. But suppose it was the French who landed, instead of the Dutch! Still, he had chosen the part he would play.

The phrases 'religious toleration' and 'liberty of conscience' command spontaneous approval in modern times. The penal laws against Catholics and Dissenters were harsh and bitter. To create an England in which all men could seek God as they pleased and dwell in peace with their fellows was indeed a noble aim for a King. But it was not the aim of King James the Second; he sought the conversion of

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England to the Roman Catholic faith. The first step to that end was to win toleration for his Catholic subjects. As a make-weight only, he reluctantly but resolutely extended his programme to cover and enlist the Nonconformists. "The King," wrote Barillon, "desires intensely [*avoit fort envie*] that Catholics and Catholics alone should have freedom to practise their religion."¹ Once his first step had been achieved, no one could doubt that Catholic toleration would give place to Catholic ascendancy, and after Catholic ascendancy was securely established Catholic uniformity would have become the goal in England as in France. Everything recorded about James, from his earliest conversion to Rome, proves that he acknowledged no bounds, except those enforced by circumstances, either to his religious zeal or to the compulsions necessary to satisfy it. He admired and applauded the intolerance of Louis XIV; he rejoiced intensely at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; he longed to use against the heresy in which his kingdom was sunk the secular terrors and torments which his brother sovereign could so happily apply.

Our ancestors saw, with the uncanny shrewdness which long, slow, increasing peril engenders, an endless vista of oppression and persecution, decked in a tinsel of fair-seeming toleration. They saw daily landing on their shores the miserable victims of Catholic 'toleration' as practised in France by the most powerful sovereign in the world. They knew the close sympathy and co-operation of the French and English Governments: they saw all that they cared for in this world and the next threatened, and if they failed to defend their rights and freedom, there might soon be no refuge open to them in any part of the globe. They therefore entered, not without many scruples and hesitations, but with inexorable resolve, upon the paths of conspiracy and rebellion.

If appeal is made to present-day opinion, the tribunal, while it acclaims 'religious toleration,' will at the same time inquire whether the conspiracy was only upon one side. Must the whole British nation submit, as the French people had been forced to do, to the religious convictions—whatever they

¹ Letter dated April 19/29, 1686.

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might be or might become—of their anointed King? Was that King to be absolved from all reproach if night and day he concerted his plans, marshalled his adherents, trained his armies, in order to change the whole life, laws, and beliefs of his people? Was he entitled to break the solemn promises he had made, to practise every deceit and manœuvre which served his purpose, to use all the pressures of force and favour to compel obedience? Was he not guilty in his turn of conspiring against the people over whom he ruled? Was he not in rebellion against all that was most sacred, most precious, to the hearts of millions? Surely, then, it was a double conspiracy that was afoot, and must now on both sides go forward to an issue.

CHAPTER XV

DRAGONNADE

(1678-1688)

DURING the ten years which followed the Peace of Nimwegen Louis XIV reached the zenith of his power. England, rent by her domestic quarrels, had ceased to be a factor in European affairs. The Empire was equally paralysed for action in the West. Its whole resources were required to meet the Ottoman invasions. In the same period the Hungarian national movement produced fierce secondary revolts, and the Emperor and his generals could not turn their eyes from the east and from the south. The coalition which had imposed some check upon the aggressions of France in 1668 and 1678 had fallen to pieces. Louis, conscious of his dominating power, gave full play to his ambitions. He sought to revive on a scale more vast the empire of Charlemagne. He contemplated himself as a candidate for the Imperial throne. He was deep in schemes which would secure the reversion of Spain and her New World empire to a French prince. His inroads upon his neighbours were unceasing. He kept England divided by bribery and intrigue. He encouraged the Turks and the Magyars in their assaults upon the Hapsburg monarchy, and thus stabbed the Empire in the back at the same time as his forward pressure upon its western frontiers grew. In 1681 he swooped across the Rhine, and, alleging the doctrine of the reunion of ancient seigneurial domains, occupied the independent Protestant town of Strasburg, as he had already absorbed the greater part of the Spanish province of Franche-Comté. He also seized Casale, and made further expansions on the north-eastern frontiers of France. In some cases a judicial investigation preceded the seizure, but Strasburg was occupied "without the formality of justice."

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In the spring of 1683 the Sultan assembled at Adrianople an army—prodigious for those days—of a quarter of a million men, and marched through Belgrade upon Vienna. The Emperor appealed to Christendom for succour. The Pope raised the standard of a Holy War on his behalf. Louis was content to remark with chilling indifference that the days of the Crusades were over. John Sobieski, King of Poland, with forty thousand men came to the rescue. In September a Christian army including Sobieski and his Poles and the Austrians under Charles of Lorraine, together with Saxons and Bavarians, defeated the Turks under the walls of Vienna in an eight-hours battle. The victors bound themselves in an alliance, to which Venice also adhered, for a continuous war against the Turks.

These conditions favoured the designs of France, and seemed to secure her recent encroachments along the Rhine and elsewhere. In 1684 a renewed expansionist movement was launched in all directions. Louis bombarded Genoa, besieged Luxembourg, massed troops upon the Spanish frontier, and, the hereditary House of the Palatinate having failed, laid claim through his sister-in-law to large territorial compensations in north-west Germany. The rest of Europe was unable to unite for resistance. In August Louis found himself strong enough to impose upon both branches of the Hapsburgs, in the Empire and in Spain, the twenty-years truce of Ratisbon, which forced them to accept and recognize all his acquisitions. His neighbours cowered beneath his unrelenting scourge in pain and fear.

While these sombre developments filled the secular sphere the Great King's designs against Protestantism became fully manifest. In the course of a very partial education two important principles had been instilled into Louis: the theory of Divine Right and the wickedness of Protestantism. As he grew older he became especially troubled that anyone should not be *de la religion du roi*, and maintained that Protestantism was the harbinger of *le mauvais exemple de la liberté*.¹ From

¹ Cf. E. Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, t. 7; D. Ogg, *Europe in the Seventeenth Century*, chapter vii.



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By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

1661 to 1679, however, he had been contented with endeavouring to convert the Huguenots in his realm by propaganda, and with irritating them by unfavourable interpretations of their charter of existence, the Edict of Nantes. A bureau was set up to encourage reversions to Catholicism by paying 12s. 6d. for each convert. To this bureau the King contributed generously. But such persuasions did not procure widespread or genuine conversions, and sterner measures were considered necessary. In 1680 a Colonel Marillac was despatched to Poitou with a regiment of dragoons. Here they were billeted on rich Huguenots, whom they proceeded to eat out of house and home. In the course of their duties they also forcibly dragged women, old men, and children to the churches, where they were sprinkled with holy water and declared Catholics. Other Protestants were tortured, whipped, or raped, and the total result was thirty thousand conversions in this district. The dragonnades had begun. 'Dragonnade' summed up the whole policy of France to Europe.

Madame de Maintenon, now the mistress of the King's pieties and secretly his wife, was dubious about the sincerity of these conversions, and deprecated the more violent forms of persecution; but the King regarded himself as an apostle, although, observes Saint-Simon, his methods of evangelization diverged somewhat from those of the original Twelve. All this was but preliminary to the crowning act of intolerance. In 1685 the Edict of Nantes was revoked. Throughout all the expanding dominions of France Protestantism became a crime. Expropriation, imprisonment, and death were the penalties by which this policy—terrible to hundreds of thousands of loyal, industrious Frenchmen—was enforced; and by a frightful provision flight from tyranny across the frontiers was forbidden, as it is at the present time from Russia. Thus our ancestors saw the all-powerful, all-grasping military monarch become also the avowed, implacable foe of Protestantism, and, indeed, of political freedom of every kind throughout Europe; and the aggressions of Louis were simultaneously launched upon the hearths and upon the souls of all mankind within his reach.

We have no patience with the lackey pens which have sought to invest this long, hateful process with the appearances of dignity and honour. During the whole of his life Louis XIV was the curse and pest of Europe. No worse enemy of human freedom has ever appeared in the trappings of polite civilization. Insatiable appetite, cold, calculating ruthlessness, monumental conceit, presented themselves armed with fire and sword. The veneer of culture and good manners, of brilliant ceremonies and elaborate etiquette, only adds a heightening effect to the villainy of his life's story. Better the barbarian conquerors of antiquity, primordial figures of the abyss, than this high-heeled, beperiwigged dandy, strutting amid the bows and scrapes of mistresses and confessors to the torment of his age. Petty and mediocre in all except his lusts and power, the Sun King disturbed and harried mankind during more than fifty years of arrogant pomp.

When the amusement of wars was temporarily suspended, his building extravagances maintained the ceaseless depletion of the wealth of France. Thousands of his soldiers and workmen perished in a futile attempt to bring the waters of the Eure to make his fountains play at Versailles. The French nobility, invited or summoned from their estates, were housed in one teeming hotbed of subservience, scandal, and intrigue in the royal palace. Thus they lost all contact with their tenantry and all influence upon political affairs, and the French Crown was deprived of the strength of a patriarchate to unite it with the people. All was sacrificed to the worship of a single man. The past of France and its future, its revenues and its manhood, alike were squandered for his personal pride. He never dared in all his wars to lead his armies in a battle. He preened himself under obsequious flattery, and read aloud or recited, with tears coursing down his cheeks, the poems and inscriptions which dutiful men of letters composed in his honour. By a life more narrowly personal even than that of Napoleon he blindly prepared the guillotines which after a hundred years had passed slew his blameless descendant, and destroyed not only the dynasty, but the system of society which was his supreme ideal.

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It was fortunate indeed that Louis's aggressions were universal. During the same years when his flail fell so cruelly upon the Huguenots and when he saw himself the heaven-appointed champion of the Old Faith, he engaged in a most grievous quarrel with the Papacy. Like Henry VIII of England, the Grand Monarch was "a good Catholic who wanted to be his own Pope." All in France must bow to his will. "He found it insufferable," says Ranke in his massive work,¹ "that the Roman See should pursue a policy not only independent of, but also frequently in direct opposition to his own." He marshalled and disciplined the French clergy with the same thoroughness as his armies. He grasped with arrogant hand all ecclesiastical revenues and patronage. He claimed not only temporal, but in many directions spiritual control. The Gallican Church yielded themselves with patriotic adulation to his commands. They vied with the courtiers, poets, and dramatists of Versailles in enthusiastic servility. All who diverged from the line of march fell under the same blighting hand which had destroyed the Huguenots.

But outside France Louis in this sphere encountered a resolute resistance. In that long line of men, often remarkable, who have occupied the Papal throne Innocent XI holds one of the foremost places. The virtues of this eminently practical and competent saint, who began life as a soldier, shine with a modern glow across the generations. How he practised humility and self-denial in all that concerned himself; how he eschewed nepotism and luxury; how he forced the economies in the Vatican budget which enabled him at once to restore its own solvency and to relieve its debtors; how he purified every department of Papal administration—all has been faithfully and deservedly set forth. In manner gentle, in temper tolerant, in mood humane, in outlook broad and comprehending, he nevertheless possessed and exercised an inflexible will and an imperturbable daring. He used his spiritual weapons with the address of an accomplished duellist, and he understood the

¹ *History of the Popes*, vol. iii, Book VIII, § 16.

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political balances of Europe as well as any statesman then alive. Such was the Pope who withstood Louis XIV with the skill and patience of William of Orange, and defeated him as decisively as did Marlborough.

The head of the Catholic faith disapproved of French persecution of the Protestants. He condemned conversions effected by such means. Christ had not used armed apostles. "Men must be led to the temple, not dragged into it." Louis organized the Gallican Church against the Holy See. He sent his Ambassador to Rome with a heavy escort of cavalry—a diplomatic dragonnade. "They come with horses and chariots," said Innocent, "but we will walk in the name of the Lord." He withdrew all spiritual authority from the French episcopacy. He pronounced decrees of interdict and excommunication; and what was perhaps of no less immediate importance, he wove himself into the whole European combination against the predominance of France. Across the gulf of the Reformation and the Inquisition he weighted the swords of Protestant armies. He comforted the Catholic Emperor. He consorted with the Calvinist Prince of Orange. To him more than to any other individual we owe the fact that the wars of William and, after Innocent's death, of Marlborough were, for Europe at large, secular struggles for worldly dominion, and that the lines of battle were no longer, as in preceding generations, the lines of faith. In the armies of the Grand Alliance Catholic and Protestant troops fought in unquestioning comradeship. The Mass and the Anglican Communion were celebrated side by side in camp and field, while hard by Dutch Calvinists, English Puritans, and Scottish Presbyterians raised their psalms and prayers before—all together—falling, united in hearty zest, upon the common foe.

Shall I ask the brave soldier who fights by my side
In the cause of mankind, if our creeds agree ?
Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried,
If he kneel not before the same altar with me ?¹

Thus was the age of religious toleration opened by the sword,

¹ Thomas Moore, *Come send round the Wine*.

and thus, amid Catholic divisions, did the Protestant states preserve their souls alive.

Meanwhile throughout Europe the aggrandizement of France and the persecution of the Huguenots were witnessed with dismay or despair. Upon the Great Elector the effect of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, following the accession of a Catholic King in England, was decisive. All his balancings between France and the Empire disappeared, and he extended the hand of friendship to Vienna. By the Edict of Potsdam he welcomed to Prussia the Huguenot refugees now fleeing at the peril of their lives from the oppression of their sovereign. Some of the greatest warriors of France quitted their native land for ever. The renowned Huguenot marshal Schomberg took service with the Great Elector, and eventually became the trusted lieutenant of William of Orange. Henri de Massue, second Marquis de Ruigny, was so distinguished in war and diplomacy that Louis offered him special exemption from the consequences of the revocation. Ruigny refused, and made his way to England. As Earl of Galway he became later on one of Marlborough's leading generals in the War of the Spanish Succession. "The whole of Europe," wrote a Dutch statesman, "is inundated with enemies of Louis XIV since the expulsion of the Huguenots."¹ Not only the Protestants, but nearly all the members of the Holy Roman Empire, especially those in southern and western Germany, now drew together for mutual protection. In July 1686 the League of Augsburg came into being. This treaty, though ostensibly defensive and to maintain the *status quo*—including the humbling Truce of Ratisbon—was also a military convention against France of detailed, strict, and far-reaching obligation. Neither Holland, which sought to go farther, nor England, which was pressed against her will towards the opposite side, was as yet enlisted.

Nevertheless, throughout all classes in England a deep fear and loathing of France began to spread. Not only were the ruling classes, in spite of their fierce divisions, profoundly affected, but the mass of the nation was stirred to its depths.

¹ *Cit. Noorden, Europäische Geschichte*, p. 30.

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In that sultry summer of 1685 Edmund Verney voiced the savage hatred of Louis XIV among the English squires: "I heare he stinckes alive and his cankers will stinck worse when he is dead, and so will his memory to all eternity."¹ In the ale-houses or upon the village greens ballads and songs expressed the popular sentiment against the French. In the parish churches collections were made to aid the Huguenots. The refugees now beginning to stream into England in considerable numbers, bringing their arts and crafts with them, were received with sympathy and hospitality from every class. French weavers, silk-workers, and paper-makers were welcomed not as aliens but as brothers by the English working-folk, and the foundations of important future industries were laid by their skill and trade-secrets. Acute observers in France like Vauban and, later, Fénelon watched with sorrow, as their writings record, the fundamental enmity growing between the French and all their neighbours, or measured with alarm the increasing strain and injury which its gigantic military burden cast upon their own country. Thus slowly, fitfully, but none the less surely, the sense of a common cause grew across the barriers of class, race, creed, and interest in the hearts of millions of men.

All moved to climax in the fateful year 1688. The Grand Monarch's quarrel with the Papacy was at its height. To disputes about pontifical authority and 'extra-territoriality' was added the conflict for the Electorate of Cologne. There were associated in those days with the Archbishopric of Cologne the sees of Munster and Liége. Thus the realm of Cologne comprised the long belt of land on the very marches which divided France from Germany and Holland, including the control of all the principal bridgeheads on the main rivers. A vacancy in the Archbishopric now occurred. Louis chose the one man of all others who was most hateful and dangerous to the Protestant Powers, and who was at the same time specially obnoxious to the Pope. Cardinal Fürstenberg, Bishop of Strasburg, was a German ecclesiastic who for more than thirty years had been a French tool. He had, in fact,

¹ Cf. *Memoirs of the Verney Family during the Seventeenth Century*.

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become the supreme manager of the French diplomatic missions in Germany. The occupation of Cologne by French troops followed the election of Fürstenberg. These events showed that not only the Palatinate but the Electorate of Cologne was about to be effectively incorporated in the French system. Against this Holland, Prussia, the Germanic Princes, the Emperor Leopold, and the Papacy were united in common interest and equal danger. Meanwhile the Turkish pressure upon the Empire was decisively relieved. The great battle of Mohacs, won so surprisingly against orders by an Imperialist commander of rising fame, Prince Eugene, broke for a time the Ottoman offensive power. Large Austrian armies were liberated for the west. Only the weight of Protestant England was wanting to create in its fullest extent the Grand Alliance against France. But England was in the grip of James II.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PROTESTANT WIND

(1688, *Autumn*)

THE lines of battle were now slowly yet remorselessly drawing up in our island. Everything pointed, as in 1642, to the outbreak of civil war; but now the grouping of the forces was far different from the days when Charles I had unfurled his standard at Nottingham. The King had a large, well-equipped regular army, with a powerful artillery. He believed himself master of the best, if not at the moment the largest, navy afloat. He could call for powerful armed aid from Ireland and from France. He held the principal sea-ports and arsenals under trusty Catholic governors. He enjoyed substantial revenues. He had on his side his Catholic co-religionists, all the personal following which the Government and the Court could command, and, strangely assorted with these, a very considerable concourse of Dissenters and traditional Roundheads. He assumed that the Church of England was paralysed by its doctrine of non-resistance, and he had been careful not to allow any Parliament to assemble for collective action.

Ranged against him were not only the Whigs, but almost all the old friends of the Crown. The men who had made the Restoration, the sons of the men who had fought and died for his father at Marston Moor and Naseby, the Church whose bishops and ministers had so long faced persecution for the principle of Divine Right, the universities who had melted their plate for King Charles's coffers and sent their young scholars to his armies, the nobility and landed gentry whose interests had seemed so bound up with the monarchy: all, with bent heads and burning hearts, must now prepare themselves to outface their King in arms.

It would indeed have been a strange war in which the sons

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of Puritans, Roundheads, and regicides would have marched for a Catholic and catholicizing King against Churchmen and Cavaliers, while the mass of the people remained helpless, passionate, terrified spectators. It would have been a war of the extremes against the means; a war of a heterogeneous coalition against the central body of English wealth, rank, and grit. Few there were who could truly measure the value of all these various elements and the force of their harmonious combination, should it occur. And above and beyond all lay the incalculable hazards and accidents of the battlefield.

Very fearsome and dubious must the prospect have seemed to the nobility, gentry, and clergy who embodied the life and meaning of the England that we still know. They had no army; they had no lawful means of resistance, expression, or debate. They could not appeal to the unenfranchised millions of peasants and townsmen. They saw in mental eye the King in martial panoply advancing upon them with all that royal power in whose sanctity they themselves were the chief believers, with French troops ready to descend at any moment upon their shores to quell rebellion, with the children of the Ironsides hand in hand with Jesuit priests. Never did the aristocracy or the Established Church face a sterner test or serve the nation better than in 1688. They never flinched; they never doubted. They comprehended and embodied "the genius of the English nation,"¹ they faced this hideous, fraudulent, damnable hotch-potch of anti-national designs without a tremor, and they conquered without a blow. Why they conquered and, above all, why they conquered bloodlessly, turned upon the action of no more than as many men and women as can be counted upon one's fingers.

Nearly all the preliminaries of the struggle in England were concerned with public opinion. The King could give his orders to the land and sea forces, and to all his great officers and adherents. He possessed a complete executive machine which, if it worked, was probably irresistible. But the nobility, the parsons, squires, and merchants who formed the

¹ See Churchill's conversation with the King at Winchester (pp. 242-243).

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conscious entity of England, were divided by the recent feuds of Whig and Tory and by many gradations of unorganized thought and temper. Their salvation depended upon their cohesion, and that cohesion could only be achieved by spontaneous action arising in a hundred loosely connected centres. Here lay the main risk. Unless their leaders could act together, each playing his part in his own station, their chances were precarious. Together they had to wait for indefinite and uncertain periods, together they must strike with the hour. Yet to concert action was treason.

In so wide and secret a confederacy, with scanty means of council and communication, every divergence, personal or local, was pregnant with disaster. Two main divisions of policy persisted almost to the end; each had massive arguments. The moderates, led by Halifax and Nottingham, urged caution and delay. The Ministry, they pleaded, was breaking up. Sunderland, Godolphin, Dartmouth were now striving to restrain the headstrong King. Alternatively, "Let him have rope enough!" Either things would get better or an overwhelming case would be presented upon which all could unite. No case had yet arisen to warrant actual treason. Nothing was more imprudent than a premature resort to arms. Remember Sedgemoor only three years ago, and how a standing army rallies to its duty once fighting has begun, and the soldiers see an enemy before them. "All is going well, if you do not spoil it."

On the other hand stood the party of action, headed by Danby. Danby was the stalwart. He was the first man of great position who definitely set himself to bring William and a foreign army into England. With Danby were the Whig leaders—Shrewsbury, Devonshire, and some others. These men urged that the danger was growing each day; that the King was bringing over Irish troops, that the Catholic grip upon the Army was strengthening, that the House of Lords could be watered and the House of Commons packed, and above all that no reform or mitigation could be trusted from such a bigot. The only hope lay in a disciplined Protestant army. As early as the spring of 1688 they took

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a most audacious decision. They invited William to invade England; and William replied that if he received at the right moment a formal request from leading English statesmen he would come, and that he would be ready by September. What followed played into the hands of these resolute men.

From April onward the party of action made good preparations. They took others into their confidence in proportion to what they needed to know. Trusty persons were informed, and their duties allotted. Efforts were made to draw in the moderates. The whole design was laid before Nottingham. At first he agreed, and then, upon misgivings in which cowardice played no part, he retracted his promise. How deadly the conspiracy had become can be judged from the story that his fellow-statesmen, leaders of a great party, Shrewsbury at their head, determined to ensure his silence by shooting him. He admitted to them that it was their right.¹ Eventually, and with justice, they trusted to his oath. A nation-wide conspiracy was on foot by the end of May. Detailed plans were made, and a great many personal contacts established. The land was full of whisperings and of mysterious comings and goings. Sunderland, elusive, baffling to his enemies, incomprehensible to posterity, heard and understood much, not all of which was imparted to his master. Barillon knew less, but reported all he knew to both the Kings whose interests he served. Louis took a grave view. James shut his ears, pursued his course, and reviewed his troops.

Upon the troops much, though not all, depended. If the Army obeyed its orders and fought for the King, England would be torn by a civil war the end of which no man could foresee. But if the Army refused to fight or was prevented from fighting by any means, then the great issues at stake would be settled bloodlessly. It seems certain, though there is no actual proof, that the general revolutionary conspiracy had a definite military core; and that this formed itself in the Army, or at least among the high officers of the Army, step by step with the designs of the statesmen. The supreme object of all the conspirators, civil or military, was to coerce

¹ Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, pp. 290-291.

the King without using physical force. We cannot doubt that this was Churchill's long-formed intention. It is reasonable to assume that in this resolve he took every measure in his power; and, of course, these measures contemplated, if the need arose, treason and mutiny as known to the law, and personal treachery to his master. With him in secret consultation were the colonels of the two Tangier regiments, Kirke and Trelawny, the Duke of Grafton, commanding the Guards, the Duke of Ormonde, and a number of other officers.

Bishop Burnet has summed up the case very fairly. Of the military conspiracy he wrote in 1691:

The chief officers of the army were tried [approached]; Churchill, Kirk, and Trelawny went into it; and Trelawny got his brother that was bishop of Bristol to join in it. Churchill did likewise undertake for Prince George and the Princess Anne; and those officers said they durst answer for the much greatest part of the army, and promised to do their utmost endeavours to bring as many as possibly they could into it. Churchill has been much censured; for as he had risen in the king's service through several degrees up to be a favourite, so a kindness which had begun upon the king's commerce with his sister was now so well fixed, that no man had more of personal favour and had found greater effects of it than he had. His coming into this design had the appearance of treachery and ingratitude, which has brought him under much reproach. But as he never betrayed any of the king's secrets to the prince, so he never set the king on violent measures, but, on the contrary, as oft as he spake to him of his affairs (which was indeed but seldom), he gave him always moderate counsels.

Bishops, generals, Jesuits, and Nonconformist leaders eyed each other in a sinister silence as spring blossomed into summer. And now events struck their hammer-blows. At the end of April James issued a second and more far-reaching Declaration of Indulgence. In a reasoned manifesto he bid for the whole-hearted support of all—and they were many—who suffered—and they suffered grievously—from the penal laws. He ordered that the Declaration should be read in all the churches. On May 18 the Seven Bishops, headed by the

¹ Foxcroft, *Supplement to Burnet's History*, pp. 291-292.

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Primate, the venerable Sancroft, protested against this use of the dispensing power. The clergy obeyed their ecclesiastical superiors, and from few pulpits throughout the country was the Declaration read. James, furious at disobedience and apparently scandalized at this departure, by the Church he was seeking to undermine, from its doctrine of non-resistance, demanded that the Bishops should be put on trial for seditious libel. Sunderland, now definitely alarmed, endeavoured to dissuade the King from this extreme step. He saw the spark which would fire the mine on which he knew himself to dwell. Even Lord Chancellor Jeffreys told Clarendon that the King was going too far, and had also the impudence to observe, "As to the judges, they are most of them rogues."¹ The King persisted: the trial was ordered, and the Bishops, all of whom refused the proffered bail, were committed to the Tower.

On June 10, while the trial was still pending, the Queen gave birth to a son. This prodigious event produced general consternation. Until then every one might hope that the stresses which racked English society would die with the death of the King. Till then the accession of either Mary, the heir presumptive, or Anne, the next in order, promised an end to the struggle between a Catholic monarch and a Protestant people. Peaceable folk could therefore be patient until the tyranny was past. But here was the succession assured in the male line to an indefinite series of Catholic princes. It was unendurable.

The conveyance of the Bishops to the Tower, their two days' trial, and their acquittal on June 30 by a Middlesex jury, were occasions of passionate outbursts in their favour by all classes in the capital. Enormous crowds thronged the river-banks to watch the barges carry the prisoners to and fro, or knelt in the streets in the hopes of being blessed by them. The humblest citizens were swayed by the same emotions which convulsed the rank and fashion of London. The troops at Hounslow joined in the rejoicings of the people. "What is that clamour?" asked the King, as he was leaving the camp

¹ Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, ii, 179.

after a visit. "Sire, it is nothing; the soldiers are glad that the Bishops are acquitted." "Do you call that nothing?" said James. These manifestations were repeated as the news spread throughout the country.

On that same night, while cannon and tumults proclaimed the public joy, the seven leaders of the party of action met at Shrewsbury's town house, and there and then signed and dispatched their famous letter to William. The signatories were Shrewsbury, Danby, Russell, Bishop Compton, Devonshire, Henry Sidney, and Lumley. Of these seven Compton had long been in the closest touch with Churchill at the Cockpit, yet he did not know how far Churchill was engaged, nor exactly what he knew. Shrewsbury and Russell were Churchill's intimate friends. Though not always colleagues in office, all three acted in concert for many years.

The letter, in the sure hands of Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor, sped to The Hague, and its authors dispersed throughout the island for the purpose of levying war upon the King. Shrewsbury, though brought up a Catholic, had become a Protestant in the storms of 1681. He never detached himself from his new faith. Now, after mortgaging his estates to raise £40,000, he crossed the sea to join William and thenceforward stood at his side. Danby undertook to raise Yorkshire; Compton toured the North "to see his sisters." Devonshire, who had been condemned to an enormous fine for assaulting a Court partisan in the royal palace and had lain since 1685 in rebellious obscurity at Chatsworth, raised a regiment of horse from his tenantry. William, stricken in his ambition by the birth of a male heir, exclaimed, "Now or never!" and began the preparation of his expedition.

Churchill was not of sufficient political rank or territorial influence to be a signatory. Whether, if asked, he would have signed is unknown; but there is little doubt he would have deemed it an honour. Though of secondary importance, he lay more in the centre of the web and held more threads than the larger figures. Day by day he waited on the King, and watched the temper of the troops. Night by night he

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sat in the narrow, devoted cluster at the Cockpit. If he was in touch with Shrewsbury and Russell and their party of action, he was also intimate with Sunderland, the chief Minister, and with Halifax, the outstanding moderate. His countenance was inscrutable, his manner bland, his discretion unfailing.

The birth of the baby Prince who set so many ponderous wheels in motion was received with general incredulity, sincere or studiously affected. From the beginning doubts had been thrown upon the belated pregnancy of the Queen. The prayers and intercessions in which the Catholics had indulged, and their confident predictions that a son would be born as the result, led to a widespread conviction that a trick had been practised. The legend that a supposititious child had been smuggled into St James's Palace in a warming-pan was rife before the ashes of the official bonfires had vanished from the streets. By a strange imprudence of the King's the majority of persons present at the birth were Papists, the wives of Papists, or foreigners. The Archbishop was absent : he had that day been conducted to the Tower. Neither of the Hydes had been summoned, though as Privy Councillors, brothers-in-law of the King, and uncles of the two Princesses whose rights to the Crown were affected, their presence would have been natural. The Dutch Ambassador, who had a special duty to William, was not invited. More important perhaps than all, Princess Anne was not there. She was at Bath. The Churchills were with her, and Sarah no doubt received an authentic account from the still beautiful Frances, now Duchess of Tyrconnel, who was on the spot.

It has been suggested that Anne had kept deliberately out of the way at the far-seeing suggestion of her favourites. How they could foretell the swift and premature accouchement, of which but twelve hours' notice was given, or imagine the controversies that would arise about it, is not explained. Nevertheless, the fact that Anne was absent enabled her to adopt a placid but unshakable scepticism upon the event which barred her succession to the Crown. "I shall never now be satisfied," she

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wrote suavely to Mary, "whether the child be true or false. Maybe 'tis our brother. . . . Where one believes it, a thousand do not. For my part unless they do give a very plain demonstration . . . I shall ever be of the number of unbelievers." When the Privy Council waited on her to present depositions affirming the reality of the birth, Anne took refuge in the pious observation that the King's word was far more to her than any deposition. William, who had incautiously authorized a thanksgiving service when the news was received, made haste to align himself and his consort with the highly convenient and popular conviction. It was vital to the nation to establish the doctrine that the child was an impostor. Sincerely attached to the principle of legitimacy, confronted with the appearance of a Papist heir, the English Protestants had no other means of escape from the intolerable admission. With the characteristic instinct and ingenuity of the English people for reconciling facts, law, and propriety with public interests and their own desires, they enshrined the legend of the warming-pan as a fundamental article of political faith. It was not dispensed with until after some eventful years, and when the question had ceased to have any practical importance.

Churchill now, as the days of action drew near, renewed his pledge given fifteen months before, and wrote to William :

August 4, 1688

Mr Sydney will let you know how I intend to behave myself : I think it is what I owe to God and my country. My honour I take leave to put into your royal highness's hands, in which I think it safe. If you think there is anything else that I ought to do, you have but to command me, and I shall pay an entire obedience to it, being resolved to die in that religion that it has pleased God to give you both the will and power to protect.¹

Such a letter written by a serving officer, at a time when conspiracy was rife and invasion imminent, was a deadly guarantee. Its capture or betrayal would justly involve the

¹ The original letter has recently been acquired by Professor Trevelyan, and his courtesy has allowed its reproduction here in facsimile.

Aug: 4th 88

Yr

Mr Sidney will lett you know how I intend
to be have my selfe; I think itt is what
I owe to god and my Contr y; my honor
take leave to put into your Royall
himekes hands, in which I think itt is
if you think ther is anny thing els
that I ought to doe, you have but to com-
me and I shall pay an intier obedience
being resolved to dye in. that the libtie
that it has pleased god to give you, both
will and power to protect; I am with all
respect,
Yr
your Royall
obedient servant
Churchill

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forfeit of his life at the hands of either a civil or a military tribunal. The invitation of the seven notables had been sent in the precautions of cipher. But Churchill's letter, which survives to this day, is in his own handwriting, signed with his name. He seems to have wished to share in a special degree the risks which his friends the signatories had incurred.

William could claim the fulfilment of such a gage at sight. If events had been different, if the great enterprise had never been undertaken, still it would have remained in his chest or in that of his successor, whoever he might be; and at any time, in conditions which had no relation to the issues of that day, it might be produced. If James II had made peace with his people and had reigned for the whole span of his life, this letter was a weapon of blackmail which a Dutch Ambassador could use upon Churchill for persuasion or revenge. Hardly ever in his life of reticence, diplomacy, and precaution had he given such a hostage. "Churchill," says Macaulay,

in a letter written with a certain elevation of language, which was the sure mark that he was going to commit a baseness, declared that he was determined to perform his duty to heaven and to his country, and that he put his honour absolutely into the hands of the Prince of Orange. William doubtless read these words with one of those bitter and cynical smiles which gave his face its least pleasing expression. It was not his business to take care of the honour of other men; nor had the most rigid casuists pronounced it unlawful in a general to invite, to use, and to reward the services of deserters whom he could not but despise.¹

Thus we see that the elevation of language is an aggravation of the offence, that a declaration by a man in a delicate position that, when the time comes, he can be counted upon to run all risks for a worthy public cause is made more despicable because it is well written. The simple dignity of the language could not easily be excelled; and we do not think that William read it with "one of those bitter and cynical smiles which gave his face its least pleasing expression." He was appealing to Englishmen to give him just such guarantees. We know that at this time he liked and admired Churchill,

¹ *History*, ii, 443.

that they looked at European political and religious problems through the same eyes, that they had talked long together ten years before ; that they both saw the domination of France as the danger and the marshalling of Protestantism as the only means of countering it. We remember how keenly William had desired Churchill to be the English Ambassador at The Hague. We have seen how Churchill would have liked to have the command of the British contingent in the Dutch pay. There are no grounds, there is no warrant, except Macaulay's spiteful imagination, for assuming that William's features lost their more pleasing expression in a bitter and cynical smile. If he was the master-statesman Macaulay has depicted, he must have realized that this was a practical and binding pledge from a remarkable man in a desperate hour. We shall recur to this incident when dealing with Marlborough's alleged correspondence with King James.

The time has now come to consider the part played by Sunderland. He was the son of a pure Cavalier, Henry Spencer, killed at Newbury. His mother, Dorothy Sidney, a gifted, brilliant woman, belonged to one of the most famous families on the opposite side. Thus the best Cavalier and Puritan blood flowed in his veins. He had married Anne Digby, of a Parliamentary stock. He seemed to be born into the very heart and centre of social and political England, and he was connected with both parties by ties of blood. He never made speeches ; but he had a vast familiarity with leading figures in every camp and throughout the aristocracy. He knew better than any other man the politics and inclination of the different noble families ; and he had access to all. Hence his knowledge and opinions were invaluable to a succession of sovereigns. He had voted for the Exclusion Bill, but was soon back in Charles's Cabinet, and acquired the highest favour under James. He had ousted the Hydes by outbidding them in favouring James's autocratic and Papist designs. To ingratiate himself with the King he had become a Papist. He was now virtually Prime Minister. He had encouraged the King on the course which led to his ruin. We find him later, only two years



THE SECOND EARL OF SUNDERLAND

Sir Peter Lely

By permission of Earl Spencer

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after the Revolution, taking his place as the trusted confidant of William III, and during practically the whole of William's reign he was the power behind the making of Cabinets. An astounding record, outstripping the fiercest hatreds and mounting upon every form of error, treachery, and disaster!

By the autumn of 1688 Sunderland was in full retreat. He had protested to James against the second Declaration of Indulgence and the trial of the Bishops. He laboured, on the other hand, to restrain Churchill from taking premature decisions. He was, he hinted, about to make an eleventh-hour effort to save the situation. The King would call a free Parliament; patience! and all would be well. While he had helped the King upon his fatal courses, and profited by so doing, he nevertheless dissuaded him from bringing in the French troops and accepting the fleet which Louis XIV so earnestly proffered. While he pocketed the money of which he was in constant need from France, he was also in touch with William. Thus it has been said that he lured his master to his follies and his fate, turned away from him at the end, and at the same time procured his rejection of the French aid which might have saved him. Indeed, so strange was his nature and conduct that coherence has been found in the explanation that all his actions were from the beginning part of a plot to destroy James, or at least that he had by now joined the great conspiracy.

Those who hold this opinion point to the disloyal letters written by his wife to her alleged lover, Henry Sidney, plotting at The Hague, while Sunderland was the chief responsible Minister of the Crown. Certainly no man played a greater part in the downfall of King James, except King James himself. When the crash came in October Sunderland fled to Holland, and was by no means ill received. The whole series of his actions from 1685 to 1690, when he was welcomed back to high office by William III, points to his having been in cordial relations with William at least throughout the whole of 1688. If we reject this theory of a plot, it is not because it does not fit the facts. Such complicated and largely purposeless treachery

at the cost of so many toils and dangers, while other more profitable and attractive courses were open, cannot be reconciled with design or pattern in any form. Sunderland was during the reigns of Charles and James, in the aspect of a competent official, one of those dangerous beings who, with many gifts of mind, have no principle of action ; who do not care what is done, so long as they are in the centre of it ; to whom bustle, excitement, intrigue, are the breath of life ; and whose dance from one delirium to another seems almost necessary to their sanity. The alarming experiences of 1688 and the advance of old age broke his nerve ; and we shall see him under King William a discreet, timid, wise counsellor, wondering with all the world how he could have escaped so well the consequences of his violent days.

All this impending struggle, so ominous for our island people, so decisive upon their destiny, was, as the last chapter has shown, one factor, but a vital factor, in the world war now about to begin. Across the sea, watching with strained vigilance the assembling armies of France, lay William of Orange with the troops and fleet of Holland. England, in her griefs and rages, was the decisive piece on the Continental board. Profoundly Protestant, vehemently anti-French, was she, with all her resources, to be cast upon the side of Gallican intolerance and French aggrandisement ? Was she so to be committed, probably with fatal effect, against the whole instinct and interest of her people by the perverse obstinacy of a single man ? Protestant Europe and Protestant England alike looked to William, as the champion of freedom against the many-sided tyrannies of Louis, to break the accursed spell. William accepted the dangerous duty. In the terse words of Halifax, "he took England on the way to France."

Before the Prince of Orange could invade England he had not only to prepare and assemble his troops and ships, but to obtain freedom to use them for such a purpose. At a moment when the whole of the French Army was massed and ready for immediate advance, it was not easy to persuade the threatened princes of Germany or the anxious burghers of

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Holland that their best chance of safety lay in sending the Dutch Army into England upon an expedition so full of uncertainty. The Great Elector was dead, but Frederick III, who had succeeded him in April, was resolute for war and, like his father, convinced that England must be gained. He even lent William a contingent of Prussian troops under the command of Marshal Schomberg. The other German princes acquiesced in the Prussian view. Most Catholic Spain set political above religious considerations, and made no bones about an expedition to dethrone a Catholic king. The Emperor alone demurred. Although dethronement was not suggested, his religious scruples were aroused. Lulled by communications from the Vatican at William's instance, he eventually agreed to an expedition to restore harmony in England and detach her from France. Only a dominating sense of common danger could have united these diverse interests and creeds upon a strategy so far-seeing and broad-minded.

William had next to convince the States-General: they had agreed to an enormous expenditure during the last two years upon the Dutch armaments; their land forces were upon a war footing, their fleet decisively stronger than the English. But the decision of the Dutch, and their ruler also, must be governed by the action of France. If the French armies marched against Holland the whole Dutch strength would be needed to meet the invader, and England must perforce be left to her fate. If, on the other hand, Louis struck upon the Rhine at Prussia and Germany, then the enterprise on which the Stadtholder's heart was set could go forward. All therefore hung in suspense. Meanwhile a great fleet of transports, with all the necessary supplies, had gathered in the Texel under the protection of the Dutch Navy, and the expeditionary force lay concentrated close at hand.

Louis XIV, with whom the initiative rested, delayed his choice till the last moment. He was ready to come to James's aid if James would definitely throw England on to the French side in the impending European struggle. All through July

and August he offered him money, an army of thirty thousand men, and the French fleet. The French troops would enforce discipline and loyalty upon the English Army, and together they could certainly crush all resistance to the royal will. James, partly from patriotic pride in the independence of his country, partly from fear of the resentment which a French alliance would arouse among his subjects, and under the advice of Sunderland, made light of his own dangers and dallied with the French offers. He was still absorbed in his electioneering plans to produce by hook or by crook a House of Commons favourable to the repeal of the Test Act. All prospect of this would be swept away by an outbreak of war, the announcement of a French alliance or the arrival of French troops. On September 2 Louis, with large armies straining at the leash, and compelled by the military situation, resolved to bring matters to a head. He delivered through his Ambassador at The Hague an ultimatum to the Dutch Republic. It was declared that William's military preparations were a menace to England: that "friendship and alliance" existed between England and France, and that any enterprise undertaken by the Dutch against England would involve an immediate French declaration of war on Holland.

This violent step defeated its own object in both the countries affected. The States-General were enraged by the menace. James, in the utmost embarrassment at the declaration, publicly repudiated all idea of an alliance. The rejection of his aid not only offended Louis; it aroused his suspicions. It was so contrary to James's vital interests that it seemed explicable only by some secret arrangement between James and William, or between Sunderland and the States-General. The irresolute, shifting policy of the English Government lent colour to the belief in Holland that it was tied to France, and in France that it was tied to Holland. At any rate, the die was cast. Louis abandoned the hope of procuring England as an ally; he must be content with seeing her, as he believed and trusted, torn by a savage civil war in which William would be involved, and during which

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the island kingdom could play no part in Europe. On September 25 all the French armies were set in motion, not against the Dutch frontier, but towards the middle Rhine. From the moment that this movement became certain the States-General eagerly granted William permission for his English descent, and James's hour was come.

As the autumn weeks slipped by, excitement and tension grew throughout the island, and the vast conspiracy which now comprised the main strength of the nation heaved beneath the surface of affairs. The King's attempt to bring in some of the regiments of Irish Roman Catholics which Tyrconnel had raised for him produced symptoms so menacing that the process was abandoned. The hatred and fears of all classes found expression in an insulting, derisive ballad against the Irish and the Papists. *Lilliburlero*, like *Tipperary* in our own times, was on all lips, in all ears, and carried a cryptic message of war to all hearts. "Lilliburlero" and "Bullen-a-lah" had been the passwords of the Irish in their massacres of Protestants in 1641. The doggerel lines, written by Lord Wharton with deep knowledge of the common folk and their modes of thought and expression, had no provable relation to William—nor to invasion or revolt. But the jingle of the chorus made an impression upon the Army "that cannot be imagined by those that saw it not. The whole army, and at last the people, both in city and country, were singing it perpetually. And perhaps never had so slight a thing so great an effect."¹ Every one watched the weathercock. All turned on the wind. Rumour ran riot. The Irish were coming. The French were coming. The Papists were planning a general massacre of Protestants. The kingdom was sold to Louis. Nothing was safe, and no one could be trusted. The laws, the Constitution, the Church—all were in jeopardy. But a deliverer would appear. He would come clad with power from over the seas to rescue England from Popery and slavery—if only the wind would blow from the east: And here one of Wharton's couplets, which nominally

¹ Burnet, iii, 19.

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applied to Tyrconnel, gained a new and, indeed, an opposite significance.

O, why does he stay so long behind?

Ho! by my shoul, 'tis a Protestant wind.

The Protestant wind was blowing in the hearts of men, rising in fierce gusts to gale fury. Soon it would blow across the North Sea!

“ Lero, lero, lilliburlero !

Lilliburlero, bullen-a-lah ! ”

sang the soldiers and peasants of England in endless repetition through those days, “ singing,” as its author afterwards claimed, “ a deluded prince out of three kingdoms.”

Sunderland and Jeffreys were at this moment in chief control of the Cabinet. The magnitude of William's preparations and the alarming state of feeling throughout England produced a complete change in their attitude. Confronted by impending invasion from abroad and by imminent revolt at home, these two Ministers, recently so pliable and so reckless, strenuously advised the King to reverse his whole policy. They abandoned at one stroke all the meticulous efforts to pack a Nonconformist House of Commons upon which infinite labour had been spent, and by which widespread irritation had been caused. Parliament must indeed be called without delay, and the King and his Government must face the fact that it would be Episcopalian in character. All further aggressive Catholic measures must be stopped, and a reconciliation made with the Church of England. The fact that this advice came from the two Ministers who had hitherto been the most hardy, and who were both, it seemed, committed beyond forgiveness to the royal policy and all the hatreds it had roused, was staggering. They must indeed have swept the King off his feet by their outburst of warning. He crumpled under their pressure and panic. Within a week he was persuaded that he could not make head against William of Orange without the support of the Church of England. To gain this support he must negotiate with the bishops. He must stoop to conquer—or even to escape.

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On October 3, in a conference at which the Primate and most of the bishops were present, he agreed to abolish the Ecclesiastical Commission, to close the Roman Catholic schools, to restore the Protestant Fellows of Magdalen College, to put the Act of Uniformity into force against Catholics and Dissenters. Action was taken accordingly with the utmost speed. The Lord-Lieutenants who had been dismissed were invited to resume their functions. Their charters were restored to the recalcitrant municipalities. The bishops were begged to let bygones be bygones. The Tory squires were urged to take their old places in the magistracy. Too late! The adverse movement had slowly but at length gathered a momentum which was uncontrollable even by those who had started it. Moreover, Englishmen in those days were obstinate and tough. As the old Tory squire John Bramston observed when asked to return to the place from which he had been ejected, "Some would think one kick of the breech is enough for a gentleman."¹ Although many expressions of gratitude and loyalty were tendered by the leading persons affected by these concessions, there was not time for them to change the currents of public opinion, which flowed with increasing force. It was evident that this sudden, belated repentance was a proof only of the weakness of the Government in the presence of approaching peril.

Now the unhappy King began to realize that by his folly and Sunderland's advice he had lost all. At the end of October he dismissed his Minister for vacillation and lack of firmness in counsel. James had drawn upon himself the evils of all courses and gained the benefit of none. He had alienated his friends; he had united all his enemies. William was about to invade him. Louis had abandoned him. The Pope, for the sake of whose faith he had hazarded all, in aversion to whom his subjects were in revolt, was working with his enemies. Outside France he had not a friend or sympathizer in Europe; and France was marching away from him upon Germany. At home he had centered upon himself the anger of almost all the wealth and power and learning of the nation

¹ *Autobiography of Sir John Bramston* (Camden Society, 1845), p. 326.

without winning support from the popular masses. He had wounded Cavaliers without gaining Roundheads. He had estranged the Church without rallying the Chapel. Although Penn and the Nonconformist organizations had naturally supported his attempt to remove the penal laws, the great bulk of their followers remained vehemently hostile to Popery, and would rather endure maltreatment themselves than join in a Catholic crusade. The Catholic gentry whose wrongs had stirred his heart were now panicstricken by the plight into which he had led them. He was not even destined to go down fighting for the cause in which he so fervently believed. In the last few months of his reign he was compelled to desert the standard he had himself set up, and to try in vain to placate the furies he had aroused, by the sacrifice of all the objectives in whose pursuit he had aroused them.

Nor has the passage of generations vindicated his efforts for Catholic toleration. Had he joined the Catholic Hapsburgs and the Protestant princes in their war against the domination of France, he would have established with his own subjects a confidence and comradeship which might well have enabled him, if not to remove, at least gradually to neglect the enforcement of the Tests. Had he allowed the incomparable soldier whose gifts he had himself so long discerned to gain for him Protestant battles upon the Continent, the English people, relieved from their fear, might well have been generous to the co-religionists of the victorious prince who had served them well. So supple a part was beyond him, and, indeed, beneath him. Instead, he set in train a movement of events which made anti-Popery and a warming-pan the foundation of a dynasty, and riveted upon the English Catholics for more than a hundred and fifty years the shackles of the penal laws.

CHAPTER XVII

THE INVASION

(1688, *November*)

HITHERTO these chapters have usually dealt with several years ; but now the pace of events is such that two chapters can cover little more than a month. On October 19 William set out upon the seas. He had taken leave of the States-General in a speech that moved even the Amsterdammers to tears.

He took God to witness that since he had been entrusted with the affairs of their commonwealth, he had never entertained a wish that was contrary to its interest. If he had erred, he erred as a man, his heart was not to blame. In his present enterprise he trusted to Providence ; but if anything fatal should happen to him, to them he recommended his memory, their common country and the Princess his wife, who loved that country as she did her own. His last thoughts should be upon them and upon her.¹

His small army was a microcosm of Protestant Europe—Dutch, Swedes, Danes, Prussians, English, and Scottish, together with a forlorn, devoted band of French Huguenots who had no longer any country of their own. They were embarked upon about five hundred vessels escorted by sixty warships—almost the entire Dutch fleet. The English Rear-Admiral Herbert led the van, and the Prince of Orange hoisted, together with his own arms, the flag of England, on which was embroidered his motto, “I will maintain,” with the addition, “the Protestant religion and the liberties of England” ; all of which was made good. Dalrymple has written of the feelings of the Dutch as they watched this impressive concourse of vessels quitting their shores :

. . . some flattered with the grandeur of their republic, others reflecting with anxiety that their frontier on one side was in the

¹ Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 188.

hands of the ancient tyrants, and on the other, exposed to an army of foreign mercenaries, all the artillery of their towns carried off, only a few ships of war left in their harbours, and the whole strength of the republic sent, during the rigours of Winter, to depend upon the hazards of winds and seas, and the fortune of war.¹

A violent gale scattered the fleet and cast it back upon the ports of Holland. One vessel, upon which no fewer than four companies of infantry were embarked, was driven on to the English coast and captured. The numbers of troops on this single vessel, together with the size of the fleet, gave the idea that William's army was four times as large as it was. But, anyhow, it had been driven back and ruined by the storms. James saw the finger of God. "It is not to be wondered at," he said, when he received the news at dinner, "for the Host has been exposed these several days." Convinced that the divine power and Holy Church had given him his son, he thought that they would also destroy his foes; and he dismissed Sunderland from his office as First Minister for being a faint-heart. But the new Secretary of State, Preston, a Protestant, renewed to him the advice of the fallen Minister. He must call a Parliament without manipulation and without delay.

Now this was a deadly matter for the King. No such Parliament could assemble in such a situation without calling in question not only the whole prerogative of the Crown, but, far graver, the *bona fides* of his son's birth. And here, by the mercy of God, was the hostile fleet scattered. Of course he refused. On this the Lord Chancellor Jeffreys abandoned himself to despair. "It is all naught," he exclaimed, with his customary profanity. "The Virgin Mary is to do all."

The reader will remember Churchill's friend and cousin George Legge, now Lord Dartmouth. When a Catholic admiral had brought the fleet to the verge of flagrant mutiny by celebrating High Mass upon his flagship, Dartmouth, a Protestant personally devoted to the King, had been placed in command to restore discipline. Dartmouth lay in the

¹ Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 190.



WILLIAM III

By permission of Earl Spencer

THE INVASION

mouth of the Thames with a naval force which, though not capable of fighting a pitched battle with the Dutch fleet, could easily, if the occasion had served, have played havoc with that fleet, encumbered with its convoy. William's plans and, to a large extent, the fate of England depended on the wind. All preparations had been made by Danby, Devonshire, and Delamere for armed revolt in Yorkshire and Cheshire, and throughout the North men were being mustered, drilled, and as far as possible armed. It was believed that William would strive to land in the North, and thither considerable bodies of the royal troops were proceeding. But the winds decided otherwise, and William ran south under full sail. On November 3 he anchored, so as to regather his whole fleet, in the Straits of Dover, in full view of the crowded coasts of England and France. The same wind that carried him here prevented Dartmouth from coming out of the Thames in any formation fit for battle, even if the loyalty of his captains and their seamen would have undertaken it. When to doubt, disinclination, and inferior strength are added adverse weather conditions, the inaction of naval forces is to be expected. The English fleet followed tardily behind the invader, and the same Protestant wind which blew him back to Torbay when he had overshot it forced the pursuers, who had got as far as Portland, to take shelter at Spithead. On November 5 William landed at Torbay, on the coast of Devon. Carstares, the Scottish divine, who had endured the boot and the thumbscrew before escaping to Holland, reminded him that this was the joyous anniversary, long celebrated by the common people of England, of the detection of the Gunpowder Plot; and William said to Burnet, ever at his side, "What do you think of Predestination now?"

James was not at first unduly alarmed at the news. It was better that the invasion should have fallen on the Western counties than upon Yorkshire. He hoped to pen William in the West, and to hamper his communications by sea. The troops which had been sent to Yorkshire were recalled to the South, and Salisbury was fixed as the point of assembly for the royal army. Meanwhile William established himself at

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Exeter and awaited the arrival of adherents. For ten days none came. Danby had expected him in Yorkshire. The West had learned its lesson after Sedgemoor, and no preparations for a rebellion had been made. William was disconcerted by this apparent apathy, and thought at first he was betrayed. However, gradually some notables arrived, and Sir Edward Seymour formed an association in his support. Most of the grievances set out in William's proclamation before he sailed had been redressed by James by the time he landed, and the issue appeared to narrow itself to the sole demand for a free Parliament. James declared that he could not call a Parliament while a hostile foreign army was in the country in the control of "a hundred voices"; and he left London for Windsor in order to avoid the pressure which the population of the capital endeavoured to exert upon him. In this lull the King still looked with confidence upon his Army, and it is thither we must turn for the next event.

Some confusion of thought is evident in the searing reproaches with which both parties and successive generations have disfigured Churchill's reputation and have singled him out to bear whatever there was of shame in the wonderful deliverance of which all stood sorely in need. No one has impugned the sincerity of his religious convictions or the wisdom of his political view. No one can dispute the proofs of his long attachment to both, or of the repeated declarations by which his position became well known to all whom it concerned. Few will urge that personal indebtedness to a prince requires behaviour contrary to a man's conscience and to the interests of his native land. Every one will repudiate the idea that Churchill—a fervent Protestant, a resolved opponent of French domination in Europe, and an adherent of our laws and Constitution as then known—should have lent his gifts and sword to the bloody task of forcibly converting his fellow-countrymen to Popery, and of setting up in England a despotism on the French model, by French arms and in French interests.

It follows, therefore, that Churchill was right to abandon

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King James. The only questions open are When? and How? Ought he to have quitted the King when he wrote his first letter of May 1687 to William of Orange? Surely not: the circumstances in question might never have come to pass. The King might yield to the increasing pressure brought upon him from all sides. He might reverse his policy. He did, in fact, reverse it. Was it, then, when he wrote his second letter to William, in August 1688, that he should have deserted James? But by this time he knew from Sunderland of the intended change of policy which even the most hard-bitten, self-seeking Ministers resolved to press upon their master, and of the probable summoning of a new Parliament chosen in the old way. Ought he, then, to have left the King's service, given up his commissions and appointments, and gone to his home or, if need be, to a prison, when James dismissed Sunderland at the end of October and withdrew the writs for a free Parliament? But by now William was on the seas. Trusting in the solemn written promises of leading Englishmen—among which Churchill's undertakings were the most explicit—he had launched out upon the hazardous enterprise to which they had called him. Ought Churchill, then, in November 1688 to have extinguished himself as a factor in the momentous events actually impending, and left William to look for his pledged aid in vain? Surely there is more shame in a breach of faith contrary to convictions than in a severance of loyalty in harmony with them. A flight from responsibility was only treachery in another and an abject form.

It was a hideous situation into which he had been drawn by no fault of his own, by no unwise or wrongful action, by no failure of service, by no abandonment of principle. But it was a situation which had to be faced and dealt with calmly and sensibly in the manner most likely to minimize the public dangers and sufferings, and to procure a good result for his country and for himself. Moreover, in conspiracies and rebellions the penalties for failure are rightly so severe that all who are unluckily drawn into them have not only a vital need for themselves, but also a duty to others associated with them and to the cause at stake, to ensure success, and above

all bloodless success, by forethought and every well-concerted measure. To lure, like Monmouth, associates and humble followers on fools' errands to their doom can find no defenders. Thus Churchill had to go through with his undertakings, and by such steps as were likely to win.

This was a dangerous time for James to have at the head of the host the Frenchman, Feversham, who had been so harshly lampooned round London and in all the garrisons after Sedgemoor. There was at the King's disposal Feversham's brother, the competent French general Roye. He certainly thought of offering the chief command to him. Roye, who had learned since his arrival of the intense feeling in the Army against France and French patronage, was well enough informed to put the suggestion aside. He could not, he said, command an army not one word of whose language he could speak. So Feversham remained Commander-in-Chief. All the more necessary was it to have Churchill almost on any terms at the royal headquarters. In the opinion of those rather loosely disciplined professional soldiers, with their brave and haughty society officers, he was without equal or rival the leading English general. The habit of soldiers to fix upon a leader who embodies to them a martial ideal and to obey him in a crisis has often been proved. Here was an hour when everything hung upon the temper of the troops. The only hope of inducing the army, and especially its officers, to fight for the King was to give the impression that the best fighting man of English blood would give or be associated with the orders they received. The misgivings which James had owned when he superseded Churchill before Sedgemoor must have recurred to his mind in an aggravated form at this juncture. But what else was there to do? Accordingly on November 7 Churchill was promoted Lieutenant-General with the command of a brigade, or, as we should now call it, a division, of the army concentrating at Salisbury.

Churchill could not consider this advancement as a mark of favour. It was, in fact, the hopeful appropriation of his military prestige to the royal cause at a moment when all title-deeds were called in question. Acceptance involved no

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assumption of new obligations on his part. In this important but subordinate position he had a seat at the councils of war and a voice in their decisions. He was not, however, in either nominal command or actual control of the army. His opinion was invited; his influence and authority were invoked. He was saddled before the nation with the responsibility. But the King really leaned upon the two Frenchmen. They were immune from the passions which shook England. He could count on their fidelity however his own subjects might behave. Thus Churchill was at the same moment made to fill the public eye and kept under supervision and control. In the circumstances this was probably the best course open to the King.

During these heart-shaking days many alternative solutions of the nation's problem presented themselves. When the royal headquarters arrived at Salisbury, it might well be found that the mood of the troops was such that no battle could be fought; but that, on the other hand, a negotiation would be entered into, as afterwards happened, with the Prince of Orange and his invading army. At that time none of the English conspirators had contemplated the dethronement of the King, and William had carefully dissembled his ambitions. His small, solid army was only the steel tip of the spear of a British resolve. He could not conquer six million English with fifteen thousand men. The constable had arrived upon the scene of disorder. He was helpless without the support of public opinion and of sturdy, well-disposed citizens. It might well be that a parley between the chiefs on both sides would result in an agreement. James might become a limited monarch, permitted to exercise his personal religion in private, but compelled to govern with Parliamentary institutions, to preserve the Protestant character of England, and, as part of the League of Augsburg, to make war upon France. He might even be compelled to choose between having his son excluded from the succession or brought up a Protestant. Again, there might be a regency, with William as Mayor of the Palace, with James as a powerless but much respected Merovingian king, the succession at his death assured to his

daughters, the Protestants Mary and Anne. All these possibilities were still open when James left London.

The King had barely arrived at Windsor when disconcerting news was received. Lord Cornbury, eldest son of Lord Clarendon, an officer of the Life Guards, found himself for a few hours in command of the troops assembling at Salisbury. Declaring that he had received orders for an immediate raid on one of William's advanced detachments, he set off with three regiments of horse, and marched them sixty miles to Axminster, whence after a brief halt he proceeded towards Honiton, professing to be about to attack the enemy. Young Berwick, who was going from Portsmouth to Salisbury to join the army, filled with suspicion by this departure, set out immediately after Cornbury with other troops—an action of singular quality when he was only eighteen. Cornbury intended to carry the whole three regiments into the Prince's army. William, duly apprised, had set superior forces in motion to surround them, and the troops would certainly have been disarmed or, if possible, incorporated. But the officers were puzzled by the length of the marches and the obvious imprudence of the operation. They demanded the production of the orders. Cornbury, seeing himself detected, rode over to William with about two hundred men, while the rest of the brigade only extricated themselves with difficulty from the trap into which they were being led.

Cornbury's desertion was the first of the successive blows by which James was to learn that he could not trust his Army. Nevertheless, the incident cut both ways. Though Cornbury had deserted, the officers and soldiers had given a signal proof of their vigilant loyalty, and this military treason had miscarried. It was impossible to tell who among the officers of the Army could be trusted. It seemed certain that if they could all be trusted the Army would fight, and if it fought it would probably win.

The fact that Cornbury was intimate with his cousin the Princess Anne and was constantly at the Cockpit; the fact that the military arrangements had been so cast as to leave this young officer in chief command at Salisbury for some

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critical hours, and that he should have taken such audacious action, all pointed to a plot in which the superior chiefs of the Army, and Churchill above all, were engaged. There is no proof; but it may well be so. Certainly Churchill was trying to bring about the predominance of William without the fighting of a battle, and this would well have served for a preliminary move.

On the 18th Princess Anne sent to William a letter the outline of which had been evidently prepared beforehand.¹

THE COCKPIT
November 18

Having on all occasions given you and my sister all imaginable assurances of the real friendship and kindness I have for you both, I hope it is not necessary for me to repeat any thing of that kind; and on the subject you have now wrote to me, I shall not trouble you with many compliments, only in short assure you, that you have my wishes for your good success in this so just an undertaking; and I hope the Prince [*i.e.*, her husband, Prince George of Denmark] will soon be with you, to let you see his readiness to join with you, who I am sure will do you all the service that lies in his power. He went yesterday with the King towards Salisbury, intending to go from thence to you as soon as his friends thought it proper. I am not yet certain if I shall continue here, or remove into the City; that shall depend on the advice my friends will give me; but wherever I am, I shall be ready to shew you how very much I am your humble servant.

On November 17 the King set out from Windsor to join the army at Salisbury. It was a strange party that fared with him to the wars. More than half were resolved, and most of these already pledged, to abandon him. Some had been for months actively conspiring with the invader. His own son-in-law, Prince George of Denmark, had actually agreed to the arrangement by which the Princess Anne should at the chosen moment leave London for William's camp. His own Household troops were honeycombed with disloyalty. His nephew, the Duke of Grafton, and nearly all his most capable officers, the leaders of many of his trusted regiments, were merely

¹ Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 249.

awaiting an opportunity to transfer their services to the enemy. Every decision, except those of hour and method, had been taken. Apart from his own Catholic communion and the French agents, there was no one upon whom he could depend. Even his fiercest partisans of Sedgemoor three short years before, men like Kirke and Trelawny, were now his foes. On all sides salutes and ceremony, unaffected respect and reverence for his person, and yet on all sides implacable treason, indistinguishable from public duty.

Among these men rode Churchill. None was more sure of himself than the newly promoted Lieutenant-General. His mind had long been made up, his pledge given, and his plans laid. Indeed, these evidences of design are the ground upon which censure has specially fastened. The elaborate, smooth-working preparations which are admired when they produce the march to Blenheim are repellent, though not less necessary, in a conspiracy. In London Sarah had her instructions about the Princess Anne, which she would fulfil with sure punctuality. Afloat, his brother George was working, with an ever-growing crowd of sea officers, to gain the fleet, and was himself about to carry his ship, the *Newcastle*, to William. Churchill himself was united in resolve and confederation with the principal nobles and functionaries. All—each playing his part wherever stationed—were taking day by day the steps which, should their designs miscarry, would cost them hearth and home and life itself. Ruin, exile, the scaffold—these were the stakes to which the compulsory game of politics had risen. They were already cast upon the board; there could be no withdrawal of them. Irrevocable! All grim, cold, doom-laden!

CHAPTER XVIII

THE REVOLUTION

(1688, *November*)

AT this crisis in his fortunes King James could marshal as large an army as Oliver Cromwell at his height. Nearly forty thousand regular soldiers were in the royal pay and moving at the royal command towards Salisbury and the Dutch invader. But the Scottish troops, about four thousand strong, had only reached Carlisle, the bulk of the three thousand Irish were still beyond Chester, and at least seven thousand men must be left to hold down London. Still, twenty-five thousand men, or double the number of William's expedition, were around Salisbury when the King arrived on November 19. Here was the largest concentration of trained full-time troops which England had ever seen. What would they do?

This was the question which dominated the thoughts of all the leading figures who composed the King's headquarters or held the commands. There had been several vexatious delays and hitches in the assembly of the troops. The Secretary at War, Mr Blathwayt, is suspected by modern writers of obstruction. The Irish Catholic regiments, who were specially important, seemed to lag upon the road, and only came in one by one. The King and Churchill eyed each other, the sovereign in mute appeal, the servant in grave reserve: and both sought to penetrate by every channel open to them the secret of the Army. To the King, with his two French generals and the French Ambassador ever at his side, the aspect was obscure and dubious. To Churchill and the commanders banded with him it was highly disconcerting. Most of the officers were no doubt thoroughly disaffected. The Protestant regimental officers were divided and in evident distress. But the Papist officers and their men

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were ardent in their loyalty, and no one could be sure that the Protestant rank and file, if strongly gripped, were not capable of being led against the foreign foe or foreign deliverers. The least trustworthy regiments at James's disposal were those upon whom he should have been able to count the most. The Guards, the Dragoons and Cavalry, those officers and men who habitually surrounded the Court, who had felt the mood of London, and were aware of the political issues at stake, were known to use mutinous language. But the main body of the Line at this juncture, though Protestant in sentiment, were still governed by their discipline and their uniforms.

Four anxious and oppressive days of reviews, inspections, and conferences followed. On November 21 the King proposed to visit his advanced covering troops, cavalry and infantry, who lay under Kirke about Warminster. The stresses through which he was passing induced in the unhappy monarch an obstinate bleeding of the nose. He was unable to ride forth. In after-days he regarded this affliction as a special interposition of Providence which alone saved him from being delivered by Churchill and Kirke into the hands of William. Berwick repeats this allegation in his *Memoirs*, and calls it "a pretty remarkable circumstance."¹ Jacobite scribes and pamphleteers have expanded it into a plot by Churchill and Kirke to murder the King, Churchill himself, they assure us, having undertaken to stab him in his coach.

Whatever may be charged against Churchill's morals, no one has impugned his sagacity, especially where his own interests were concerned. If he had murdered King James, William would have been able to reach the throne after enforcing merciless execution upon the criminals who had slain his beloved father-in-law. The greater the severity with which he treated them, the more becoming the auspices under which he would have succeeded. Indeed, it would be vital to him to avenge by every terror known to the law a crime by which he would himself have profited so highly. This accusation, which even Macaulay does not adopt, may be

¹ *Memoirs*, i, 31.

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rebutted on these low but solid grounds and consigned to the rubbish heap of Jacobite mendacity.

We may dismiss also as an unwarrantable suspicion Churchill's alleged scheme to deliver the King into the hands of William. In dealing with these calumnies one after the other it is best to use the arguments which would most have appealed to those who bring them forth. The last thing that William desired was to have James on his hands. Nothing would have repelled the sympathy and public acceptance on which he counted more than the news that he had captured or stolen the King and was keeping him prisoner. All those forces that were demanding a free Parliament would have also demanded a free King. William, the adroit, masterly statesman, moving in an atmosphere which he and his English supporters understood, would never have made such a mistake, and Churchill, who knew the situation even better than William, was the last man to commit such a silly act.

It must be added that Churchill himself repudiated this charge as soon as he heard of it. Clarendon's diary¹ states :

December 3, 1688. In the dining room [at Berwick, near Hindon²] I met my Lord Churchill. I told him what the King had told the Lords of his Lordship's design to deliver His Majesty to the Prince of Orange, if he had gone to Warminster. He denied it with many protestations, saying, that he would venture his life in defence of his person; that he would never be ungrateful to the King; and that he had never left him, but that he saw our religion and country were in danger of being destroyed.

It is natural that such charges should be made after the event about a man who had deserted his sovereign and benefactor by those who had suffered so woefully from his action.

Only in one respect does Churchill appear to have been curiously imprudent. He seems to have abandoned his usual reserved manner. The inscrutable dissembler, according to

¹ Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, ii, 211, 214.

² This was a house belonging to Bishop Burnet in Wiltshire.

the Jacobite gossip, for once was indiscreet. An air of recklessness, of insolence, of flippancy even—so far as we know, unexampled in the rest of his life—is attached to his demeanour and procedure. He had, they tell us, “loll’d out his tongue” at the Hyde Park review of the Army and “openly laughed” at the whole affair.¹ This behaviour had been seen and reported. He, Sunderland, and Godolphin, when the news of Lord Cornbury’s desertion was received at Windsor, had been seen *unawares* “going hand in hand along the gallery in the greatest transports of joy imaginable.”² At supper on the 20th he, with the Dukes of Grafton and Ormonde and others, had urged the newly arrived colonel of the Royal Irish Regiment and the Duke of Northumberland, of the Household Cavalry, to join the revolutionary party, heedless of the fact that, unless they were gained, as they were not, the conversation would be reported, as indeed it was. At the meeting of superior officers James appealed to their loyalty. Churchill and others repeated their usual assurances, but a deputation was sent immediately afterwards to Feversham to inform him that, however devoted they were to his Majesty’s service, they could not in conscience fight against a prince who was coming over with no other design than to “protect the calling of a free Parliament for the security of their religion and liberties.” The Jacobite writers declare that Churchill was the first to swear that he would “shed his last drop of blood” in the King’s defence. This phrase finds confirmation in his own letters and conversations: but these also make it clear that he meant in defence of the King’s person; not of his power, nor still less of his policy. Such equivocations were inevitable and common. They were the symptoms of violent times. A vast repudiation of allegiance united Englishmen of every rank and party. Those who, like Churchill, stood nearest the King until they quitted him had no other choice. But not often was treason less deceitfully veiled. It was in its last phase more like a political breach between Ministers than a plot against a sovereign.

¹ Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, pp. 184-185.

² Clarke, *Life of James II*, ii, 218.

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It is recorded that at this same meeting the King ended his appeal to his officers by offering to allow any who could not serve him faithfully to go freely.

He which hath no stomach to this fight,
Let him depart ; his passport shall be made
And crowns for convoy put into his purse.

But this could be no real offer. Can anyone suppose that if Churchill or any other had risen from the council board and said, "I accept Your Majesty's offer, and am now going home, or, if I choose, to join the army of the Prince of Orange," he would have been suffered to leave the royal presence free or without a clash of arms? There are some offers which authority can make and may be wise to make, but which are in the nature of things utterly valueless to the weaker side. Here was no way out.

James, warned from many quarters, meditated Churchill's arrest. Feversham on his knees demanded it, declaring his disaffection patent. Churchill's incarceration at Portsmouth was debated. This was not a light matter to decide. His appointment had been advertised to the troops. The news of his arrest would have been not less injurious than his desertion. The shock to the Army would have been as great. So many were involved, so near, so intimate, so long-trusted and proved so faithful, that the unhappy sovereign knew not where to begin, nor, if he began, where to stop. On all sides his narrow circle of Papists, Irish, and Frenchmen encountered whisperings, averted eyes, or even cold shoulders and hostile looks. The King hesitated, delayed, put the matter off until the morrow.

We need not delve into a painful analysis of Churchill's feelings at this juncture. Lord Wolseley has drawn for us a harrowing picture of the moral and sentimental stresses through which his hero is supposed to have passed on the night of November 23, when he is represented as finally making up his mind to desert James, and how he must have balanced his duty and gratitude to his master and patron on the one hand against the Protestant cause upon the other. These well-meant efforts of a friendly biographer have certainly no

foundation. All had, as we have shown, been settled long before. There never had been any process of weighing and balancing which side to take. The only difficulty had been to judge a ceaselessly shifting situation. But now all was simple. Policy and plans were settled; the last preparations had been made. The hour of action was always, to him, the least arduous of trials. That hour had now come.

A council of war was held on the evening of November 23. Churchill, supported by Grafton, when asked his opinion, advised an advance towards the enemy, while Feversham and Roze were for retreat. The King accepted Feversham's opinion. Macaulay's account reads as if irritation at having his advice rejected, and the knowledge that this could only arise from distrust of his intentions, determined Churchill's course. This cannot be so. His may well have been the right advice to give on military grounds. There is a curious symmetry about his actions on many occasions which seems to range a correctness and justice of view on the event of the moment with his general designs. But it is equally arguable that he gave the right advice either because he knew the opposite course would be adopted, or because, if he had been taken at his word, that would have been convenient to his resolves. Every forward march would carry him nearer to William, would enable the two women for whose safety he was concerned, his wife and the Princess Anne, to make their escape more easily, and even his own decisive ride would be shorter. Once the Army was dispersed in its retreat, and the loyal were separated from the disloyal regiments, his arrest would be easy. All these matters are covered by the general relationship in which the chief actors stood to one another and by judgment upon the main issues.

We believe that Churchill stayed with the Army till the very last moment that he dared—and he dared much. By the end of the council on the 23rd he had convinced himself that the military plot had failed; that there was no prospect that the English commanders would be able to go to the King and say in the name of the Army, "You must open negotiations with William, and you must call a free Parliament." They

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had used, so far as it was possible, all their influence upon the troops without decisive results, and brought themselves into extreme peril thereby. Nothing remained but to escape with their immediate retinues and followers.

Therefore, on this same night Churchill, the Duke of Grafton, and Colonel Berkeley, with about four hundred officers and troopers, mounted their horses and rode forth from their camp by Salisbury. Sometime during the 24th they arrived at Crewkerne, about twelve miles from William's headquarters at Axminster, after a march of nearly fifty miles.¹ Churchill left the following letter to the King behind him :

SIR,

Since men are seldom suspected of sincerity, when they act contrary to their interests, and though my dutiful behaviour to Your Majesty in the worst of times (for which I acknowledge my poor service is much overpaid) may not be sufficient to incline you to a charitable interpretation of my actions, yet I hope the great advantage I enjoy under Your Majesty, *which I own I can never expect in any other change of government*,² may reasonably convince Your Majesty and the world that I am actuated by a higher principle, when I offer that violence to my inclination and interest as to desert Your Majesty at a time when your affairs seem to challenge the strictest obedience from all your subjects, much more from one who lies under the greatest personal obligations to Your Majesty. This, sir, could proceed from nothing but the inviolable dictates of my conscience, and a necessary concern for my religion (which no good man can oppose), and with which I am instructed nothing can come in competition. Heaven knows with what partiality my dutiful opinion of Your Majesty has hitherto represented those unhappy designs which inconsiderate and self-interested men have framed against Your Majesty's true interest and the Protestant religion ; but as I can no longer join with such to give a pretence by conquest to bring them to effect, so I will

¹ All historical and biographical authorities have hitherto stated that Churchill was only accompanied by a handful of adherents. The following letter of William's seems to show that he took a considerable body of officers with him.

William to Bentinck (November 24/December 4, 1688)

"A gentleman has just arrived to convey me Lord Bristol's respects, who said that in passing through Crochorn [Crewkerne], he found there Lord Churchill with about four hundred horses [? horse], all officers who are coming to join us." (*Correspondence of William and Portland*, i, 61.)

² Author's italics.

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always with the hazard of my life and fortune (so much Your Majesty's due) endeavour to preserve your royal person and lawful rights, with all the tender concerns and dutiful respect that becomes, sir, Your Majesty's most dutiful and most obliged subject and servant,

CHURCHILL¹

In the records at Blenheim a copy of this letter was found wrapped in another written by Prince George of Denmark, no doubt at the same time and under Churchill's advice. But the Prince, who, with Ormonde, deserted his father-in-law the next day, takes a view which extends beyond the island that had become his home ; and for the first time we see how large a part the Protestant coalition against France played in the councils of the Cockpit.

"Whilst the restless spirits of the enemies of the reformed religion," wrote the Prince,

backed by the cruel zeal and prevailing power of France justly alarm and unite all the Protestant princes of Christendom and engage them in so vast an expense for the support of it, can I act so degenerate and mean a part as to deny my concurrence to such worthy endeavours for disabusing of your Majesty by the reinforcement of those laws and establishment of that government on which alone depends the well-being of your Majesty and of the Protestant religion in Europe.

We have no doubt that these words expressed the deepest convictions of Churchill as well as those of the honest Prince who wrote them. James's ideal of England redeemed to the true faith, dwelling in definitely established absolute monarchy, advancing independently, but in royal alliance with the great King of France to the extirpation of Protestantism in Europe, shone for him clear and bright. In the mind of his servant there arose perhaps another picture more practical, not less dire, not less majestic. John Churchill saw the rise of Britain to the summit of Europe, curbing and breaking with the aid of William of Orange the overweening power of France. He saw himself, with the Dutchman if need be, or under England's Protestant Princess, advancing at the head of armies to the

¹ Printed from the copy among the Blenheim MSS.

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destruction of that proud dominion. He may even have seen at this early time the building up upon the ruins of the French splendour of a British greatness which should spread far and wide throughout the world and set its stamp upon the future.

To William, Churchill's arrival at Axminster was an enormous relief. Next to defeat his deadliest danger was victory. To avoid bloodshed, to avoid beating with foreign troops a British army in the field, was essential to his aim of securing the throne. He welcomed his new adherent with formal ceremony, and used his services to the best advantage.

It is said in the *Life of James II* that when Churchill arrived at William's headquarters Marshal Schomberg greeted him with the remark "that he was the first Lieutenant-General he had ever heard that had deserted from his colours." But William's manifesto to the British Army had said :

We hope likewise that you will not suffer yourselves to be abused by a false Notion of Honour, but that you will in the first place consider what you owe to Almighty God and your Religion, to your Country, to your selves, and to your Posterity, which you, as Men of Honour, ought to prefer to all private Considerations and Engagements whatsoever.

We can well understand the Jacobite exiles putting such a taunt in the mouth of Schomberg, but it seems unlikely that William's confidant and second-in-command should at this critical juncture have indulged in such an ill-timed and inconsistent affront. After all, Schomberg himself had, on this same cause of Protestantism, changed sides not as a Lieutenant-General, but as a Marshal of France, and no man lay more exposed than he to a rejoinder in kind.¹

It cannot be proved that the defection of so many important officers destroyed the possibility that the army would fight. If a regular purge had been made, as Feversham proposed, and sergeants promoted to fill all vacancies in the commissioned ranks, if Catholic or French officers had been

¹ Among the pictures which Marlborough collected at Holywell is one (now in Earl Spencer's possession) of Marshal Schomberg. It was painted specially for Marlborough, and it seems unlikely that he would have been at such pains to perpetuate in his own home the memory of a man who had offered him so blatant an insult on such a decisive occasion.

placed in the key commands, and if the King himself had led his soldiers to battle, it is probable that a most fierce and bloody event would have followed. But Churchill's desertion, followed as it was by that of his own relations and closest servants, broke the King's spirit. When he saw that he could not even keep the Churchill who had been till now his intimate, faithful servant for nearly a quarter of a century, he despaired. He collapsed morally, and from that moment thought only of sending his wife and child to France and following them as soon as possible. It is this fact, and the personal elements that entered into it, that have made Churchill's desertion of James at Salisbury, although compulsory and inevitable, the most poignant and challengeable action of his life.

And now revolt broke out all over the country. Danby was in arms in Yorkshire; Devonshire in Derby; Delamere in Cheshire. Lord Bath delivered Plymouth to William. Byng, a Rear-Admiral representing the captains under Dartmouth's command, arrived at his headquarters to inform him that the fleet and Portsmouth were at his disposal. City after city rose in rebellion. There was an eager rush of notabilities to greet the rising sun. By one universal, spontaneous convulsion the English nation repudiated James.

It was high time for the wives to do their part. Anne and Sarah had no mind to await the return of the indignant King. James sent orders to search both Churchill's houses, and to arrest Sarah. The Princess prevailed upon the Queen to delay the execution of this last order till the morning, and in the night the two women fled from the Cockpit. There are two theories upon this reasonable step: the first natural panic, and the second long-prepared design. Sarah in her account represents the Princess in a state of terror. She would rather "jump out of the window than face her father." Under her orders Sarah therefore made the best arrangements possible for immediate flight. "All was unconcerted." But this is not convincing. Anne knew that she herself was in no personal danger; her fears were for her beloved Mrs Freeman, who would certainly have borne the

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brunt of the royal anger. It had not been definitely settled whether when the crisis came Anne should leave the palace and seek protection in the City or whether she should try to join her husband in William's camp. The means of flight had been foreseen, and six weeks earlier a wooden staircase had been constructed from Anne's apartments to those of Sarah, which afforded an unguarded exit from the Cockpit. The Bishop of London was dwelling close at hand in concealment, and Lord Dorset, whose romantic nature was attracted by such a service, was in constant touch with him. When the orders for Sarah's arrest were followed by sure news that Prince George had quitted King James, the two ladies were able to escape. In the dead of night they descended the wooden staircase, found the Bishop and Lord Dorset awaiting them, waded through the mud of Pall Mall, in which Anne lost her shoe, to Charing Cross, and thence were carried in a coach to the Bishop of London's residence in Aldersgate. After a brief halt they set out at daybreak for Dorset's beautiful Copt Hall, in the heart of Epping Forest. When their flight was discovered, Lady Clarendon and Anne's waiting-woman raised so loud an outcry that the Princess had been carried off, probably to be murdered by Papists, that the Queen and her household had no small difficulty in pacifying their own Guards. All search for the fugitives was vain, and when the unhappy King reached Whitehall in the afternoon, he could but exclaim in despair, "God help me! Even my children have forsaken me!"¹

From Copt Hall the Princess and Sarah proceeded without delay to Nottingham. The Bishop, who had discarded his clerical attire, escorted them, armed with sword and pistols, a veritable embodiment of the Church militant here on earth. At Nottingham Devonshire was already in arms at the head of the nobility and gentlefolk of Derbyshire organized into about a thousand horse. The Princess was received with royal honours and rapture by the rebels, and warmly welcomed by

¹ See, *inter alia*, Samuel Pepys' account in Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, xi, Appendix V, p. 214; Clarke, pp. 226-227; *Conduct*, pp. 17-18; Lediard, pp. 53-54; Clarendon, *Correspondence and Diary*, ii, 207.

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the townsfolk. A Court was improvised and a banquet held. In default of servants the dragoon volunteers waited upon the guests, and one of them, Colley Cibber, the poet and playwright, has left us an impression of Sarah which is so vivid and agreeable that it demands inclusion.

We had not been many days at Nottingham, before we heard that the prince of Denmark, with some other great persons, were gone off from the king to the prince of Orange ; and that the princess Anne, fearing that the king her father's resentment might fall upon her for her consort's revolt, had withdrawn herself in the night from London, and was then within half a day's journey of Nottingham ; on which very morning we were suddenly alarmed with the news, that two thousand of the king's dragoons were in close pursuit to bring her back prisoner to London. But this alarm it seems was all stratagem and was but a part of that general terror which was thrown into many other places about the kingdom at the same time, with design to animate and unite the people in their common defence ; it being then given out, that the Irish were everywhere at our heels, to cut off all the Protestants within the reach of their fury. In this alarm our troops scrambled to arms in as much order as their consternation would admit of ; when, having advanced some few miles on the London road, they met the princess in a coach, attended only by the Lady Churchill (now duchess dowager of Marlborough), and the lady Fitzharding, whom they conducted into Nottingham through the acclamations of the people. The same night all the noblemen, and the other persons of distinction then in arms, had the honour to sup at her royal highness's table, which was then furnished (as all her necessary accommodations were) by the care and at the charge of the Lord Devonshire.

At this entertainment, of which I was a spectator, something very particular surprised me ; the noble guests at the table happening to be more in number than attendants out of liveries could be found for, I, being well known in the lord Devonshire's family, was desired by his lordship's maitre d'hotel to assist at it. The post assigned me was to observe what the lady Churchill might call for. Being so near the table, you may naturally ask me what I might have heard to have passed in conversation at it ; which I should certainly tell you, had I attended to above two words that were uttered there, and those were " Some wine and water."

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These I remember came distinguished and observed to my ear because they came from the fair guest whom I took such pleasure to wait on. Except at that single sound all my senses were collected into my eyes, which during the whole entertainment wanted no better amusement than stealing now and then the delight of gazing on the fair object so near me. If so clear an emanation of beauty, such a commanding aspect of grace, struck me into a regard that had something softer than the most profound respect in it, I cannot see why I may not without offence remember it ; such beauty, like the sun, must sometimes lose its power to choose, and shine into equal warmth the peasant and the courtier. . . . However presumptuous or impertinent these thoughts might have appeared at my first entertaining them, why may I not hope that my having kept them decently secret for full fifty years, may be now a good round plea for their pardon ? ¹

We cannot think that Macaulay would have had any difficulty in blaming Churchill, whatever he did. As a Whig historian he is, of course, ardent for the Revolution. Of James he says :

During three years the King had been proof to all argument and to all entreaty. Every Minister who had dared to raise his voice in favour of the civil and ecclesiastical Constitution of the realm had been disgraced. A Parliament eminently loyal had ventured to protest gently and respectfully against a violation of the fundamental laws of England, and had been sternly reprimanded, prorogued, and dissolved. Judge after Judge had been stripped of the ermine for declining to give decisions opposed to the whole common and statute law. The most respectable Cavaliers had been excluded from all share in the government of their counties for refusing to betray the public liberties. Scores of clergymen had been deprived of their livelihood for observing their oaths. Prelates, to whose steadfast fidelity the King owed the crown which he wore, had on their knees besought him not to command them to violate the laws of God and of their land. Their modest petition had been treated as a seditious libel. They had been browbeaten, threatened, imprisoned, prosecuted and had narrowly escaped utter ruin. Then at length the nation, finding that right was borne down by might, and that even supplication was regarded as a crime, began to think of trying the chances of war. ²

¹ *An Apology for the Life of Mr Colley Cibber* (1740), pp. 57-59.

² *History*, ii, 469-470.

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Yet when Churchill obeyed this imperious call and took the action which enabled a good cause to triumph without the shedding of English blood, Macaulay denounces him with all the pungent rhetoric and elaborate scorn of which he is master. Now all rebellion is treason. To be guilty of treason is to be a traitor. Nineteen-twentieths of England, we are assured, were at this time traitors. Apparently this almost universal crime was only infamous in one man. For all the others Macaulay makes ample excuses; nay, they are glorified. The bishops, begged by the harassed sovereign for succour and accorded their every request, refused even to make a pronouncement against the invader. Fine spirit among the bishops! A regiment, asked to proclaim its readiness to fight for the enforcement of the Tests, threw down its arms. Patriotic feeling among the troops! Bishop Compton, taxed by James with having signed the invitation to William, avoided the lie direct by an ingenious subterfuge. "Sir," he said, "I am quite confident that there is not one of my brethren who is not as guiltless as myself in this matter." Questioned again the next day when all the others had denied, he said, "I gave your Majesty my answer yesterday." "The equivocation," says Macaulay, "was ingenious." He had "parried the question with an adroitness which a Jesuit might have envied." How clever!

Danby seized York. He spread a rumour that the Papists (of whom scarcely any existed in the neighbourhood) were up and were slaying the Protestants, and then rode to the rescue of the city at the head of a hundred horsemen crying, "No Popery! A free Parliament! The Protestant religion!" On this wave he disarmed the garrison and placed the governor under arrest. But what was this? Rebellion, treason, lying propaganda; sharp practice by any computation? No, says Macaulay, "Danby acted with rare dexterity." To ride into a peaceful city after having terrified the inhabitants with the shameful falsehood that their lives were in danger, and then to disarm the faithful officers and guardians of the King's peace, is described as "rare dexterity." The peers, who by scores had been conspiring, intriguing, and preparing

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for active rebellion against James for six months past, had all sworn the Oath of Allegiance on taking their seats in the Upper House. But here Macaulay shows us how civic duty rightly overrides mere ceremonial obligations. He invites us to admire all these perjured nobles. They struck for England in a good cause without being hampered by the pedantry of scruple. The Lord-Lieutenants were the King's personal representatives, and special obligations of fidelity rested upon them. Yet how manly, how enlightened, how public-spirited they were in such large numbers to desert and abandon King James, once it was quite clear how the event was going! The oath of a Privy Councillor is more solemn and explicit even than the oath of a Lord-Lieutenant. Macaulay places his tinsel chaplets on the brows of every Privy Councillor who worked for James's undoing and expulsion.

From this universal commendation there is but one exception. In Churchill all resistance to James was shameful. Because he did not immediately go to James and, falling on both knees, declare, "I am opposed to Your Majesty, I am therefore a traitor, put me to death," he is a scoundrel—nay, more; he is the only scoundrel in England! What in all others was the hard but sacred duty of sustaining civil and religious liberty without regard to personal or party ties, in Churchill becomes the most infamous trick of the seventeenth century. What in all others was the broad heave of the British shoulders against insufferable burdens and injury, in him is the extremity of personal dishonour. What in all the rest is rightful, salutary action in a great crisis, in Churchill is "a dark conspiracy." But for Churchill's action, England would have been drenched with English blood—yet he alone is the villain. The event is glorious: the instrument dishonoured. The end was indispensable to British freedom: the means, we are assured, were disgraceful to Churchill's character. The relief and joy of the nation that an inevitable revolution was accomplished without the agony of civil war have resounded through the ages; and with them echo the censures upon the one man whose action, and whose only possible action, brought so great a blessing.

The King, having assembled such peers and Privy Counsellors as were still in London, was advised by them to enter into negotiations with the Prince of Orange and to accord an amnesty to all who had joined him. He nominated Halifax, Nottingham, and Godolphin as his Commissioners to treat with William. He did not know that Halifax and Nottingham had both been privy to William's design. Neither did Halifax know that the King had no intention to treat, and was only using the negotiations as the means of gaining time to send his wife and child abroad and to follow them himself. William, on his part, was in no hurry, and more than a week passed before the necessary safe-conducts were granted to the Commissioners, and they were conducted to his headquarters, which had now reached Hungerford. Meanwhile James had sent his infant heir to Portsmouth with orders to Dartmouth to send him at once to France. Dartmouth, for all his loyalty, refused to obey this fatal command, which he declared would render him "guilty of treason to Your Majesty and the known laws of the kingdom." "Pardon me therefore, Sir," he wrote from Spithead on December 3,

if on my bended knees, I beg of you to apply yourself to other counsels ; for the doing this looks like nothing less than despair to the degree of not only giving your enemies encouragement, but distrust of your friends and people, who I do not despair but will yet stand by you, in the defence and right of your lawful successor. . . . Pray, Sir, consider further on this weighty point : For can the Prince's being sent to France, have other prospect than the entailing a perpetual war upon your nation and posterity ; and giving France always a temptation to molest, invade, nay hazard the conquest of England, which I hope in God never to see. . . .¹

But James was not to be deterred. The baby Prince was brought back from Portsmouth, and on the night of December 9 the Queen, escorted only by Count Lauzun and Riva, an Italian gentleman, escaped, with her child, to Gravesend and thence to France. As soon as the King knew that his wife and son were safely off he prepared to follow them.

¹ Dalrymple, ii, Part II, 246.

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Elaborate arrangements having been made to deceive the Court and the Council, the King stole from the palace an hour or two after midnight on December 11, crossed the river, and rode hard for the coast. He endeavoured to plunge his realm into anarchy. He threw the Great Seal into the Thames; and sent orders to Feversham to disband the Army, and to Dartmouth to sail with what ships he could for Irish ports. Dartmouth, stricken to the heart by his master's desertion of his post, placed the fleet under the orders of William. But Feversham, with reckless wickedness, scattered the soldiers, unpaid but not disarmed, upon the population. General consternation ensued. The King's Commissioners saw they had been befooled. The wildest rumours of impending Irish massacres spread through the land. The London mob sacked the foreign embassies, and every one seized arms in defence of hearth and home. A wild panic and terror, long remembered as "Irish Night," swept the capital. Undoubtedly a complete collapse of civil government would have occurred but for the resolute action of the Council, which was still sitting in London. With difficulty they suppressed the storm, and, acknowledging William's authority, besought him to hasten his marches to London.

But the very next day, while the Council was sitting, a poor countryman arrived at the door with an appealing message from the King. James had actually got on board a ship, but, missing the tide, was caught, mauled, grabbed, and dragged ashore by the Faversham fishermen and townsfolk, who took him for a Jesuit in flight. What followed is briefly and well told by Ailesbury, who gives unconsciously a picture which historians seem to have missed. Ailesbury had striven hard to dissuade James from his flight, and when the news that the fugitive had been intercepted at the coast was brought to the decapitated Council, he broke the prolonged silence by proposing that his Majesty should be invited to return forthwith to his post. Charged with this task, he set out by coach and a-horse to retrieve his master out of the hands of the mob at Sheerness. He was haughtily received by the royal captive. His high jack-boots prevented him from falling on his knees when entering

the presence, and he could only bob his knee. Whereat James, unshaven, ill-fed, rounded up and put in the pound like an errant bull by the local townsfolk and seamen, but unshakably sure of his royal rights, remarked, "Ha! You were all Kings when I left London." To this reception at the end of his loyal and difficult journey through the turbulent, panic-stricken towns of Kent and by roadways infested with revolt and disorder Ailesbury—so he tells us—used some extremely plain language, to which his sovereign was graciously pleased to hearken. He then proceeded to collect some victuals, bake the best bread possible in the circumstances, and ask the King whether he would not dine in state. His Majesty signified his pleasure; the local dignitaries and some of the populace were admitted wonder-struck to the miserable dwelling, and the faithful Gentleman of the Bedchamber, jack-boots notwithstanding, managed (by holding on to the table) to serve him on the knee; thus restoring public confidence and decorum. At intervals throughout the day fragments of the disrupted royal household arrived in Faversham. The barber, with the valets and clothes, arrived in the afternoon; the cooks a little later. The Board of Green Cloth was on the spot by dusk; the royal saddle-horses came in during the night, and a troop of Life Guards were reported approaching the next morning. Thus the Court was reconstituted, though in a somewhat skeleton state.

Ailesbury stayed by his master thenceforward. He arranged for a hundred troopers of the Life Guards to be drawn up in single file to encourage him with their acclamations. He persuaded James to drive through the City of London, where the people, perplexed and dumbfounded by the awful event of his flight, received him with relief and almost enthusiasm. He accompanied James from Whitehall when, at William's order, he was escorted by the Dutch Guard down the river to Rochester. He shared with him the peril of the "hideous shooting of the bridge" on the swift, outflowing tide. Once this danger was overcome, the royal party picnicked agreeably in the boats, the King passing food and wine to the Dutch captain of the convoying flotilla.

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Ailesbury abode with the King at Rochester, and again endeavoured to prevent his leaving the island. William, who had been profoundly inconvenienced by his return and longed for his fresh departure, caused hints to reach him that his life was in danger. James, no physical coward—indeed, as we have seen, a proved veteran by sea and land—was cowed to his marrow by the overwhelming tide of adverse opinion and the wholesale desertion and repudiation of almost all on whom he had counted. After some days of painful suspense the unhappy man escaped to the river by the back door, which the Prince of Orange had taken pains to leave unguarded, and this time succeeded in leaving English soil for ever. We are told in his so-called memoirs that he expected he would be sent to the Tower, “which no King ever quitted except for his grave,” and he felt it his sacred duty to preserve his royal person from such outrageous possibilities.

But though the downfall and flight of this impolitic grandson of Henry of Navarre were at the time ignominious, his dignity has been restored to him by history. Heredity, fatalism, the besetting Stuart infatuation of obstinacy, his stern religious faith, his convinced patriotism according to his lights, all combined to lead him to disaster. He was doomed alike by his upbringing, his office, and his nature. His fixed domestic ideas made an effective foreign policy impossible. His Catholic convictions left him a stubborn anomaly upon a Protestant throne. He was at once a capable administrator and a suicidal politician; a man virtuous in principle and gross in practice; a personage equally respectable and obnoxious. Yet he carried with him into lifelong exile an air of royalty and honour which still clings to his memory.

On the afternoon of December 23 William learned that the King had fled, and felt himself in one form or another undisputed master of England. He lost no time in taking the step for the sake of which he had come across the water. The French Ambassador was given twenty-four hours to be gone from the island, and England was committed to the general coalition against France.

CHAPTER XIX
MARLBOROUGH AND WILLIAM
(1688-1690)

THE Prince of Orange had now become the effective military ruler of his new country ; but there was no lawful Government of any kind. The Convention Parliament—assembled on the authority of the revolutionary junta—dived lustily into academic disputes, and the differences between the Whigs and the Tories, temporarily merged in their common danger, soon reappeared. Was the throne vacant? Could the throne ever be vacant? Was there a contract between the King and the people which James had broken? Had he abdicated by flight, or merely deserted? Could he be deposed by Parliament? Arising from all this, should William become Regent, governing in the name of the absent James? Should Mary become Queen in her own right? Had she not, in view of the virtual demise of the Crown, in fact already become Queen? Or should William be made sole King; or should William and Mary reign jointly; and if Mary died, should Anne forthwith succeed, or should William continue to reign alone as long as he lived? Both Houses, both parties, and the Church applied themselves to these lively topics with zest and without haste.

William's aim from the first was to obtain the crown of England for himself alone. Until James's flight he would have been content with any solution which brought England into the coalition against France; but thenceforward he saw no obstacle to his full ambition. Years before Burnet had earned William's gratitude by inducing Mary to promise, should she succeed her father, that they should be joint-sovereigns. The Stadtholder now flew higher still. He inti-

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mated first that he would not be Regent, governing in the name and against the will of a dethroned sovereign with whom he would certainly be at war. "He had not," he said, "come over to establish a Commonwealth or be a Duke of Venice."¹ Rather than that he would return to Holland. Mary's rights were espoused by Danby, who had been disappointed that William had not landed in Yorkshire, and that his own share in the event had not been larger. He proposed that Mary should be Queen. William disposed of this idea by putting it about that he would not be "his wife's gentleman-usher." Through Bentinck, his Dutch confidant, he bid high for the sole kingship, with his wife but a consort. Burnet was staggered by this ingratitude to Mary. The idea of supplanting her in her lawful and prior rights caused widespread anger. William's appetite found its only prominent supporter in Halifax. It was, in fact, the first shock to his popularity in England.

Churchill steered a middle course, at once independent and judicious, through these controversies. Like most of the Tories, he could not vote directly for the dethronement of James; but neither would he actively support the Tory proposal for a regency to which William objected so strongly. He stayed away from the critical division on January 29, and a regency was voted down by fifty-one to forty-nine. He voted later that James had "deserted" the throne and had not "abdicated"; but when the Lords gave way to the Commons and agreed that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be joint sovereigns, he supported their decision. Sarah, under her husband's advice, persuaded Anne to surrender in favour of William her right to succeed to the throne on Mary's death. Thus William gained without dispute the crown for life. This was a service of the first order, and probably counted in William's mind even above the desertion at Salisbury which had prevented a battle. From the very beginning, however, and even on this subject, the King showed a definite coolness towards the Churchills. On Halifax suggesting to him that Lord Churchill "might perhaps prevail with the Princess of

¹ Foxcroft, *Halifax*, ii, 203.

Denmark to give her consent" he bridled, saying, "Lord Churchill could not govern him nor his wife as they did the Prince and Princess of Denmark." Halifax, who recorded this conversation, noted in William "a great jealousy of being thought to be governed," and added, "That apprehension will give uneasiness to men in great places. His dislikes of this kind have not always an immediate effect as in the instance of Lord Churchill," but "like some slow poisons work at a great distance of time."¹

William accepted the arrangements made by Parliament with good grace. He confirmed Churchill in his rank of Lieutenant-General. He employed him practically as Commander-in-Chief to reconstitute the English Army. In this important task Churchill's military knowledge and organizing capacity had full scope. Schomberg, who presided over the process on William's behalf, remarked laconically to Ailesbury, "My lord Churchill proposes all, I am sent for to say the general consents, and Monsieur Bentinck is the secretary for to write all."² The Dartmouth Papers tell the same tale a year later. "Lord Churchill is the greatest man next to Marshal Schomberg in the army affairs."³ Other extracts show that Churchill did not at this time forget his old friend Legge. "Lord Churchill has already acquainted the Prince how useful a minister in the management of affairs you are."⁴ But Dartmouth soon fell upon evil days, and died in the Tower. At the coronation in April Churchill was created an earl. The reader will recall Eleanor Drake's connexion by her sister's marriage with James Ley, first Earl of Marlborough. The third Earl had fallen in battle at sea with the Dutch in 1665, and the title so honourably borne had since 1680 been extinct. We can understand why Churchill chose it for his own.

In May war was formally declared against France; and as William was detained in England and later embroiled in Ireland, Marlborough led the English contingent of eight thousand men against the French in Flanders. The world

¹ Foxcroft, *Halifax, loc. cit.*

² Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 245.

³ P. Frowde to Dartmouth, January 3, 1690, Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 249.

⁴ P. Bowles to Dartmouth, December 1, 1688, *ibid.*, 242.

conflict which had now begun only gradually reached its full intensity. The French, who had a magnificent army, found eventually in Luxembourg a commander not unworthy to be named with Condé and Turenne. The allies ranged themselves along a 300-mile crescent from the Upper Rhine to the Belgian coast. They were more numerous than the French, and able everywhere to assume the offensive. Four separate armies advanced simultaneously, but in the leisurely fashion of those days, against the French frontiers. In the north the Spaniards and Dutch moved through Belgium towards Courtrai under the Prince of Vaudemont. Next in the line and farther south the Dutch and Swedes, together with the English contingent, sought, under the command of the Prince of Waldeck, to operate between the Sambre and the Meuse. Beyond the Ardennes the Prussians and North Germans under the Elector of Brandenburg aimed at the capture of Bonn, upon the Rhine; and farther south still the forces of the Empire, under the able leadership of the Count of Lorraine, struck at Mainz. A modest but definite measure of success rewarded all these operations. Lorraine took Mainz and, moving down the Rhine, helped the Elector to capture Bonn. The Prince of Vaudemont possessed himself of Courtrai and forced the French to fall back upon strong lines between the Lys and the Scheldt. But the only real fight of the year belonged to the credit of the Prince of Waldeck and the army in which the English served.

When Marlborough landed at the end of May he found the British troops in very poor condition, and the three months which elapsed before active operations began were indispensable to their training and discipline. He made a great improvement in both. We have a letter from him to Mr Blathwayt, who had continued to be Secretary at War, from Maestricht in which he says :

I desire you will constantly let me have what passes in Ireland. . . . I desire you would send me over a copy of the oath that Monsieur Schomberg gave to the officers about their never taking nor giving money for their employment, because I am resolved to give the same oath here.

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He requested William's decision upon whether he would have the Regiments of Foot learn the Dutch exercise or else continue the English.¹ He drilled his men sedulously, saw to their pay, food, and clothing with that meticulous house-keeping from which his armies always profited, and repressed abuses of all kinds. In a few months the British force, from being the worst, was recognized as the best managed in Waldeck's army of about thirty-five thousand men.

The Prince of Waldeck was one of William's trusted leaders. His prolonged experience had made him a pedant in the art of war. Indeed, it was to him, as to most of the commanders at this time on both sides, very like a game of chess. The gambits and defences of each were well known to all players of a certain professional standing. As long as no obvious mistakes were made nor any serious risks run, no marked change in the situation was likely. Here a fortified town might be taken, there a small area of hostile country might be used as feeding-ground. But if the conventional counter-measures were taken by the opponent, these small prizes were placidly relinquished, and the armies continued to face and manœuvre against each other with the decorum of performers in a minuet. For this sedate warfare Waldeck's age of sixty-nine was no disqualification. He soon saw the improvement in the quality of the British, and took a liking to Marlborough.² On July 3 he wrote to William that he could not "sufficiently praise the English"; and on the 26th that the English numbered six thousand foot and five hundred horse, "the whole so well ordered that I have admired it, and I can say that Monsieur Milord Marlbourck and the Colonels have shown that their application has had a good effect." On August 24, having crossed the Sambre, he stood before the small ancient town of Walcourt, which rises on its hillock from an undulating and wooded landscape. Here he was well satisfied to live upon the enemy's country, sending his foraging parties out to gather supplies.

¹ Add. MSS., 21506, ff. 96, 98.

² See summaries of his letters to William in *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1689-90. William to Marlborough, July 6/16, 1689: "J'ay bien de joye d'apprendre que vous vous accordez si bien avec le Prince de Waldec." (Blenheim MSS.)

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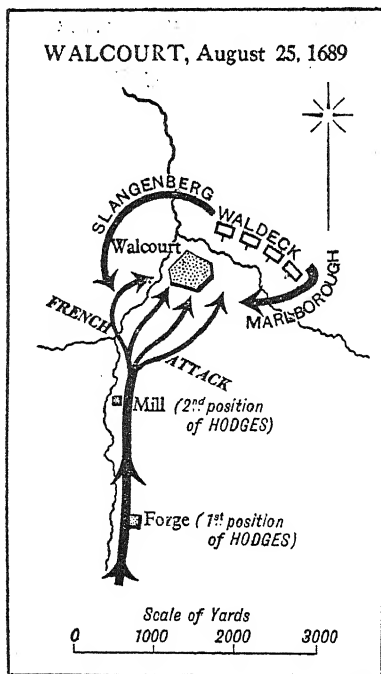
Marshal d'Humières, who commanded the opposing French army, felt bound to resent this trespass. D'Humières, though also a well-trained professional, had an irritable streak in his nature. He was said to have owed his appointment to the admiration which Louvois cherished for his wife. He marched with becoming haughtiness to expel the intruders, and on the morning of August 25¹ fell upon the allied foraging parties and outposts about two miles south of Walcourt. It happened that Marlborough was in charge of these petty operations, and that the 16th Regiment of Foot (now the Bedfordshire Regiment), together with some three hundred Dutch horse and dragoons, formed their support. At nine o'clock the approach of large French forces was noticed, and soon after it was realized that these were the vanguard of the whole French army. Cannon were fired to recall the foragers and alarm the camps. Meanwhile the English regiment barred the advance of the French. They were heavily attacked; but under Colonel Hodges offered a stubborn resistance. For nearly two hours these six hundred English infantry prevented the hostile advance. When Marlborough learned that all was in readiness in Waldeck's army, he directed them to withdraw to the higher ground on the east of the hill of Walcourt, where other British troops and several batteries had come into line. The manner in which this single battalion effected its orderly retreat in the closest presence of very powerful French cavalry was a foretaste of the qualities which Europe was taught reluctantly to recognize in the English Army.

Meanwhile the Prince of Waldeck had occupied the town of Walcourt and had posted his army in position mainly on its eastern side. All the foragers had returned to camp, and d'Humières could take his choice whether he wanted a battle or not. It was now noon. The ground was not at all favourable to the French, but d'Humières seems to have been inflamed by the sharp fighting in which his vanguard had been engaged and did not take the trouble to reconnoitre. He ordered a strong column of French infantry, including

¹ Misdated by Wolseley the 27th and by Macaulay the 5th. See p. 319, n. 3.

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eight battalions of the French Guard, to carry the town of Walcourt by assault. This was certainly a very difficult task to undertake voluntarily. The defences of the town were antiquated, and the walls had crumbled in several places. Still, it stood upon a hill, was partly covered by a river, and was girt about with a strong field army. Nevertheless, the French made a most determined attack upon the town, and although raked by Marlborough's flanking batteries from the eastern



heights as they approached, they very nearly mastered its defenders. These were, however, reinforced by two battalions under the English Colonel Tollemache. Although the French Guard strove to burn the town gates, and everywhere fought with determination, they could make no progress, and the greensward around the ramparts was strewn with the bodies of five hundred of their men. D'Humières saw himself forced to widen the battle. He threw in his whole army in an improvised attack upon the allies' right, which had by now been extended west of Walcourt.

This was the moment for Waldeck's counter-stroke. At six o'clock Slangenberg led the Dutch infantry forward from the western side. Simultaneously Marlborough attacked from the eastern side of the town. Placing himself at the head of the Life Guards and Blues, and supported by two English regiments, he charged upon the French right flank, inflicting very grave injuries upon the troops already unduly tried. The French cavalry was not only numerous, but was led by that same Villars of whom we have heard twenty years before at the siege of Maestricht, and whom we shall meet twenty years later at Malplaquet.

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Villars saved the French infantry from destruction, and d'Humières was able to withdraw his army as the night fell with a loss of six guns and two thousand of the flower of the French foot. As the casualties of the allies were about three hundred, the action wore the aspect of a victory. Feuquières, the French military critic, remarks severely "that this combat should never be cited save as an example to avoid."¹ D'Humières' military reputation received a fatal blow, and in the next campaign he was superseded by Luxembourg.

The Prince of Waldeck rejoiced in his good fortune, nor was he ungenerous to those who had contributed to it. "All our troops," he wrote to the States-General, "showed great courage and desire to come to battle, and the English who were engaged in this action particularly behaved themselves very well."² To William he wrote, "Colonel Hodges and the English did marvels and the Earl of Marlborough is assuredly one of the most gallant men I know."³ These comments are confirmed by the French accounts, which mention especially the Life Guards and two English battalions under the command of "Lieutenant General Marlbroch." Waldeck wrote further to William that "Marlborough *in spite of his youth*⁴ had displayed in this one battle greater military capacity than do most generals after a long series of wars." William, being, like Marlborough, only thirty-nine himself, was not perhaps deeply impressed by this reference to the infirmities of youth. He wrote, however, in handsome terms to Marlborough:

I am happy that my troops behaved so well in the affair of Walcourt. It is to you that this advantage is principally owing. You will please accordingly accept my thanks and rest assured that your conduct will induce me to confer on you still further marks of my esteem and friendship on which you may always rely.⁵

Marlborough was made Colonel of the Royal Fusiliers, a regiment armed with a light musket called a fusil and employed in the special defence of the artillery. Such appointments were lucrative, and the fact that this regiment was under the Master-General of the Ordnance might encourage

¹ *Mémoires de Feuquières*, iii, 262.

² *London Gazette*, No. 428 (1689).

³ *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, King William's Chest, 5, No. 96, letter dated August 25.

⁴ Author's italics.

⁵ William III to Marlborough, September 3/13, 1689 (Blenheim MSS.).

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Marlborough to hope that this financial plum, so necessary for the support of his earldom, would some day fall into his hands. Walcourt was the only recognizable success which greeted the Dutch and English peoples in the year 1689. Thus the new King's reign opened auspiciously for him.

It happened, however, that during the summer a dispute had arisen between the King and Queen Mary on the one hand and Anne and her husband on the other, the brunt of which fell entirely on the Churchills. Up to this point all had been love between the two royal sisters, with the added thrill of conspiracy against their father. Till now Sarah had seemed to be the bond of union between them. The cordial letters which Mary wrote to her have often been printed. "Your friendship makes my sister as dear to you as to me," the Princess of Orange had written on September 30, 1688, "and I am persuaded we shall ever agree in our care for her, as I believe she and I should in our kindness to you, were we near enough to renew our acquaintance." But all things change with time, and many in a very short time. Sarah has reason on her side when she contends that her influence upon the succession settlement in the event of Mary's dying before William was used in the general interest rather than from any unworthy eagerness to ingratiate herself or her husband with the new sovereigns. For soon afterwards came the question of the Parliamentary grants to the Royal Family. And here began the rift.

Anne, who had agreed willingly to the sacrifice of inestimable reversionary rights, naturally wished, especially in the event of her sister's death, to have an independent income granted directly to her by Parliament. William resented this desire, and his wife championed his view. Both thought, moreover, that £30,000 a year was ample for the Princess's household; indeed, William expressed his wonder to Lord Godolphin how the Princess could spend so much, "though," adds Sarah, "it appeared afterwards that some of his favourites had more." Considering that Anne already had £20,000 a year settled upon her for life by Parliament, this was not generous treatment of a Princess who had voluntarily resigned

an important contingent claim upon the crown. The Cockpit household took care that Parliament was informed of the dispute, and, by way of having something to concede, suggested £70,000 as an appropriate figure. It was soon apparent that they had strong support. Mary sent for Anne and advised her to trust herself entirely to the King's gracious bounty. Anne replied sedately that "she understood her friends had a mind to make her some settlement." "Pray what friends have you," rejoined the Queen, "but the King and me?" A nasty family dispute about money matters; and not only upon money matters, but status!

Anne was found to have the House of Commons on her side. The Marlboroughs steadfastly espoused her interest. While John was fighting at Walcourt Sarah had actively canvassed the Tory Party. An independent position for the Princess Anne was held in Parliament to be essential to the Revolution settlement. Tempers rose high on both sides. Every form of pressure from ugly threats to dazzling bribes was put upon Sarah to persuade her mistress to a compromise. The figure was no longer in dispute. Shrewsbury himself undertook to win through Sarah Anne's acceptance of £50,000 from the King. Sarah was impervious. After what the Cockpit had seen of the royal generosity, they insisted upon a Parliamentary title. Sarah stood by her mistress and her friend. She cast away for ever the Queen's favour; and this at a time when there was no reason to suppose that Anne would outlive Mary. There is no doubt that Marlborough guided the helm and faced the blizzard. But this was no Quixotism. It was his private interest that the matter should be settled so; it was his duty to the Princess; it was also the public interest, with a foreign king on the throne, and an ex-king claimant, that an English princess, heir designate, should be independently established. Again we see in Marlborough's story that strange coincidence of personal and national duties at crucial times. The new sovereigns had to accept a definite, public defeat, and the House of Commons voted the Princess Anne a life grant of £50,000 a year.

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Marlborough had his own position in the country and with the King. But the Queen henceforward pursued Sarah with keen hostility, and this she soon extended to Sarah's husband. She blamed Sarah for the estrangement which had sprung up between herself and her once dearly loved sister. Repeatedly she urged Anne to remove this obstacle to their natural affection. Anne, forced to choose between the Queen and Sarah, made it plain with all the obstinate patience of her nature that she would stand by her friend, as her friend had stood by her. This choice, so deliberate and unshakable, was deeply wounding to her sister. Perhaps all this had as much to do in the future with Marlborough not getting the commands to which by rank and capacity he was entitled as had the exigencies of William's political system or his proclivities for Dutchmen. At any rate, it lay and lurked behind the daily routine of war and government.

But we cannot convict Sarah of misbehaviour in this matter. Neither she nor her husband would yield the interests of the Princess Anne to win the favour of the new reign. On the lowest ground they looked farther ahead than that, and on the highest ground they stood by their patrons. All their moves were made with great good sense, and in this case with right feeling. They helped the King in the constitutional settlement; they withstood him when the interests of the Princess they served were unfairly assailed.

King William was neither the first nor the last statesman to underrate the Irish danger. He had at first regarded its existence as a good pretext for obtaining a substantial army from Parliament, and had neglected Tyrconnel's overtures for a settlement. By May, when the European campaign was beginning on all the fronts of France, he found a serious war on his hands in Ireland. James had arrived in Ireland, was welcomed as a deliverer, and now reigned in Dublin, aided by an Irish Parliament and defended by a Catholic army of a hundred thousand men, of whom half were organized by French officers and furnished with French munitions. The Irish army was further sustained



SARAH, COUNTESS OF MARLBOROUGH
By permission of Earl Spencer

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by a disciplined French contingent. Soon the whole island except the Protestant settlements in the North was under Jacobite control. While William looked eastward to Flanders and the Rhine, the eyes of his Parliament were fixed upon the opposite quarter. When he reminded Parliament of Europe, they vehemently directed his attention to Ireland. Thus drawn by contrary calls, the King made the time-honoured mistake of meeting both inadequately. He had sent Marlborough to command the British contingent of eight thousand of the best British troops under the Prince of Waldeck in Flanders ; later he sent Schomberg and Ginkel with newly raised regiments to Ulster. The European campaign was unfruitful, and the Irish disastrous. The year 1689 ended with James established in Ireland, with Schomberg's troops wasted by disease and reduced to the defensive, and the Protestant North in extreme distress and peril. Had William used his whole strength in Ireland in 1689 he would have been free to carry it to the Continent in 1690. But the new year did not renew the choices of the old. He found himself compelled to go in person with his main force to Ireland, and by the summer took the field at the head of thirty-six thousand men. Thus the French Government, at the cost only of five thousand troops, a few hundred extra officers, and moderate supplies, diverted the whole power of England from the main theatres of the war. Had Louis backed the Irish enterprise with more force, he would have gained even larger rewards.

William left the government in the hands of Queen Mary, assisted by a council of nine, four Whigs and five Tories,¹ of whom Marlborough was one, besides being at the same time Commander-in-Chief. A most critical situation now developed. The Prince of Waldeck was encouraged by the memory of Walcourt to lay a trap for the French. But Luxembourg was no d'Humières, and at the battle of Fleurus in June he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the allies. At the same time the French fleet was stronger in the Channel than

¹ Besides Marlborough the members were Danby (now Marquess of Caermarthen), Lord President ; Godolphin at the Treasury ; Nottingham and Henry Sidney (now Viscount Sidney), Secretaries of State ; together with Russell, Devonshire, Monmouth (afterwards Earl of Peterborough), and Sir John Lowther (afterwards Lord Lonsdale).

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the combined fleets of England and Holland. Admiral Herbert (now Earl of Torrington) was none the less ordered to bring them to battle. On June 30/July 10 he was defeated in a sea-fight off Beachy Head, the brunt of the action falling upon the Dutch. This was, according to Mahan, "the most conspicuous success the French have ever gained at sea over the English." It was said in London, "The Dutch had the honour, the French the advantage, and the English the shame." The French, under the energetic Tourville, now enjoyed the command of the sea. They could land an invading army in England; they could prevent the return of William from Ireland. The council of nine over which Queen Mary presided had to face an alarming crisis.

They were sustained by the loyalty and spirit of the nation. The whole country took up what arms could be found and feverishly organized the home defence. With a nucleus of about six thousand regular troops and the hastily improvised forces of the nation, Marlborough stood ready to resist an invasion for which an excellent French army of over twenty thousand men was available. William's decisive victory at the Boyne on July 1/11 threw James out of Ireland and back to France; but the English peril continued at its height. James implored Louis to give him an army for invasion, and there seems no doubt that in July and August 1690 this was the right strategy for France. Had it been adopted Marlborough's task would have been peculiarly difficult. He would have had to face the disciplined veterans of France with a mere handful of professional troops aided by brave but untrained masses, ill-armed and with hardly any experienced officers. Such a problem was novel to the military art of those days; but it was not necessarily beyond the resources of his flexible genius. He would probably 'have thought of something,' and our history might have dwelt with pride upon a battle of Dorking or a battle of London as the first example of the power of hardy, stubborn yeomanry and militia supported by the population against regular forces. But James's appeals were disregarded by the French King. His sympathy for the sufferings

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of the fugitive from the Boyne was more marked than his admiration of his capacity. The anxious weeks of July and August slipped away, with no more injury or insult to England than the burning of Teignmouth by French troops. The French fleet was dismantled and laid up for the winter, and the English and Dutch fleets were refitted and again at sea. Thus the French opportunity was lost.

Torrington's conduct at the battle of Beachy Head drew upon him the fury of the King, the Council, Parliament, and the nation. He was instantly removed from his command, arrested, and tried for his life before a naval court. His tactics have not lacked defenders. He was unanimously acquitted by the court-martial, but their verdict could not save his reputation or restore his command.¹

When the news of the naval defeat had been received at Queen Mary's council board, Marlborough and Admiral Russell were among the few Cabinet officers who did not

¹ One of King William's letters to Marlborough at this time deserves publication.

"AU CAMP DE CRUMLIN

"9/19 de Juillet 1690

* "Vous pouvez facilement croire combien j'ay este touche du Malheur qu'est arive a ma flote je doute fort que Mr Torrington pourra se justifier de sa conduite. J'espere que l'on fera tous les efforts possible pour la remettre bien tost en Mer. Je n'aprehende pas beaucoup une descente car selon les informations les ennemis n'ont point des troupes sur leur Flote. Et j'y suis confirme par les lettres que nous avons pris lesquels vous seront communiquees, mais ils pourront bien envoyer en ces Mers un detachement de fregattes qui nous incomoderoit fort. Et nous aurons bien de la pience d'empescher qu'il ne nous brulent nos Vesseaux de Vivres et de Transport, Je suis tres aise des assurances que vous me donnez d'affection des Troupes et du vostre. Apres les adventages que j'ay emporte icy je croi que les Malintensionies en Angletere n'auseront se remuer, soiez assure de la continuation de mon amitie.

"WILLIAM R.

"Je n'aures plus besoin des deux Batt des Gardes Et mesme si vous aviez encore besoin de Troupes je pources bien tost vous en envoyer pourveu que le passage soit libre.

"Ce que vous m'avez ecrit il y a quelque temps que Sr J[ohn] G[uise] m'auroit dit, je vous assure qu'il ne m'a jamais parlé de vous ny que je n'ay rien houi de ce que vous m'avez mande."

This last sentence was in answer to a letter of Marlborough dated June 17 in which he refers to an accusation brought against him by a quarrelsome Colonel Sir John Guise to the effect that he had made a large sum of money out of his command in Holland. See *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1690-91, p. 34; Dalton, *Army Lists*, ii, 244. This may conceivably be connected with the Jacobite story that Marlborough when in Flanders had drawn pay for more men than were actually in his command. In any case, he had instantly referred the matter to the King. See also below, p. 482.

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volunteer to take command of the fleet. We must admire the spirit of these elderly nobles, none of whom knew one end of a ship from the other, and most of whom were devoid of military instruction or experience. They said they would sit on board the flagship and make the sea captains fight. Fortunately such desperate remedies were not required.

In the middle of August the Council was astonished to receive from the Commander-in-Chief a proposal of which he guaranteed the success, and on which he declared to the Queen that he would stake his reputation. This was to send the bulk of the regular troops out of the country upon an expedition to Ireland. Their minds, so lately exposed to the apprehensions of invasion, did not respond to his view that the danger had passed, and that the initiative should be regained. Danby's¹ antagonism to Marlborough had become personal and pronounced. When Marlborough wished his brother George to be promoted Admiral, Danby rudely remarked, "If Churchill have a flag, he will be called the flag by favour, as his brother is called the general of favour."

Inspired by Danby, the Council vetoed the project, but since Marlborough was supported by Admiral Russell and aided by Nottingham, the Queen referred it to the King. Marlborough's plan was to seize the ports of Cork and Kinsale, which were the principal contact bases of the French in Ireland, and thus cut Ireland from French reinforcements. A double attack on the Jacobite forces in Ireland from the south as well as from the north would, he declared, be decisive. William, who was besieging Limerick, debated the matter with his Dutch generals. They, like the English Council of State, were adverse. But the King saw at once the strategic merits and timeliness of the plan. He discarded his generals' advice, overruled the Council, and placed Marlborough in charge of the expedition.

He wrote to him from the siege of Limerick :²

August 14/24, 1690

* I have just received your letter of the 7th. I strongly approve of your plan to embark with four thousand infantry

¹ Now Marquess of Caermarthen.

² Blenheim MSS.



THE EARL OF MARLBOROUGH IN 1690

Painted for Sarah "when he was sunburnt."

By permission of Earl Spencer

MARLBOROUGH AND WILLIAM

and the marines, which together make four thousand nine hundred men, and is a sufficient force to capture Cork and Kinsale. You will have to take enough munitions with you, and use the ships' guns, for we can send you none from here. But for cavalry I can send you enough. Mind the army does not fall down on your hands [*prendres bien soin que l'armee ne vous tombera pas sur les bras*]. The weather is what you will have to watch. Hasten all you can, and let me know about when you will be there.

WILLIAM R.¹

The Queen was still doubtful. "If the wind continues fair," she wrote to her husband,

I hope this business will succeed; though I find, if it do not, those who have advised it will have an ill time, all except Lord Nott[ingham] being very much against it, Lord President only complying, because it is your order, but not liking it, and wondering England should be so exposed, thinking it too great a hazard.²

However, the orders were issued.

This was Marlborough's first independent command. He had not sought to go to Ireland before, and it is presumed that he did not wish to fight against an army led by King James in person. But now James was gone. The season was far advanced, and all preparations were made with the utmost speed. The expedition and its shipping were concentrated at Portsmouth, whither Marlborough repaired by August 26, and embarked on the 30th. He spread false rumours that it was intended to raid the coast of Normandy as a reprisal for Teignmouth; but the French were not deceived. Marlborough's sailing was delayed for

1

14/24 d' Août 1690

* Je vien de recevoir vostre lettre du 7, J'approuve fort le dessin que vous avez de vous embarquer sur la flote avec 4000 fantaissons et les Regt: Mariniers qui fairont ensemble 4900 hommes ce qui est un corps sufficient pour prendre Kingsale et Corck. Il faudra que vous preniez l'ammunition sufficient Et quelque canon des Vesseaux car nous vous en pouvons point envoye d'icy, Mais pour la Cavallerie je vous en envoyeres ces sufficament et prendres bien soin que l'armee ne vous tombera pas sur les bras, il n'y a que le temps qu'il faut bien menager et vous depescher le plus tost qu'il vous sera possible et m'advertir environ du temps que vous y pourez estre

WILLIAM R.

² August 26/September 5 (Dalrymple, iii, Book V, 128).

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a fortnight by contrary winds while every day was precious. The health of the troops on board suffered, and their supplies were partly consumed. But the mere rumour of the thrust produced a strategic effect. Leaving their Irish allies to their fate, Lauzun and Tyrconnel, who were tired of Ireland, and had no intention of being cut off there, retreated to France with the remainder of the French contingent.

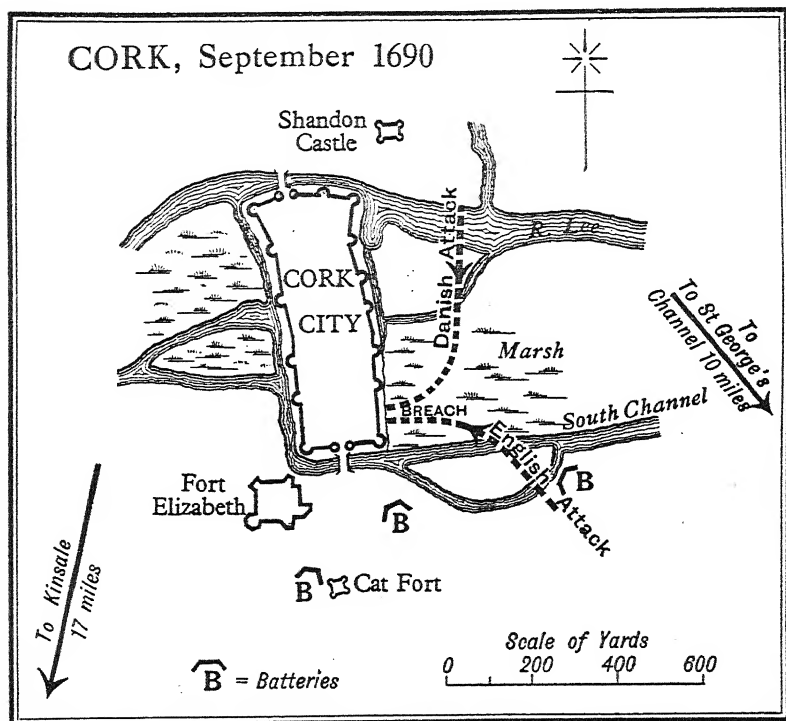
Marlborough, very seasick, sailed on September 17, "bound (by God's assistance)," as the cautious master of the flagship wrote, "for ye coast of Ireland, Being of all Sorts about 82 Sayle."¹ After silencing the batteries at the mouth of Cork Harbour he ran in upon the tide to Passage West and disembarked his army of about six thousand men seven miles inland during Tuesday, September 22. William meanwhile had abandoned the siege of Limerick, and returned to London. He had left orders with Ginkel to send five thousand men to join Marlborough in accordance with the plan. Marlborough had particularly asked that this detachment should consist of English troops, of whom there was no lack in the main army, and for Kirke, who was available, to command them. The Dutch general had no intention of allowing any purely English force or English commander to gain an independent success. It was with all the Dutchmen from William downward a maxim that the English were ignorant of war and must be strongly led by trained foreign officers and upheld by disciplined foreign troops. Ginkel had therefore, with many profuse apologies, selected five thousand Danes, Dutch, and Huguenots, who had now arrived on the north side of Cork under the Duke of Würtemberg.

This magnifico was junior in military rank to Marlborough, but far above him in birth. He claimed, as a prince of a royal house, to command the whole operation. A vexatious dispute, which Ginkel had foreseen with relish, arose. Marlborough displayed his commission from the Queen, and the Duke referred to his lineage and lost his temper. Meanwhile their two forces occupied the outlying works of Cork by separate action. There was no time to appeal for a

¹ Finch Papers, ii, pp. 438-439.

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decision about the command to William, and no certainty how he would have settled it. To secure unity, therefore, Marlborough was forced, not for the last time in his life, to propose the vicious expedient of antiquity that the rival generals should exercise command on alternate days. Würtemberg was with difficulty persuaded to accept this compromise.



When the first day fell by lot to Marlborough he chose "Würtemberg" as the password for the troops. The Duke, surprised and mollified by this courtesy, selected "Marlborough" as the word for the second day, and thereafter made no further difficulties. Indeed, he seems to have yielded himself naturally and easily to Marlborough's guidance, once he felt it.

The governor of Cork, Colonel McElligott, returned a disdainful answer to the summons to surrender, and the

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attack upon the city was at once begun. Its defences were in a neglected condition, and its garrison of about five thousand men was too small to hold all the necessary works. Powerful batteries were landed from the fleet, and a breach made in the eastern wall. Marlborough was ready to assault on the evening of the 26th ; but the governor beat a parley, which, though it came to nothing, allowed the tide to rise and gained him another day. At dawn on Sunday, the 27th, all was again in readiness. The batteries, supported by a frigate, which came up the river on the flood, bombarded the breach in the town. A Danish column a thousand strong forded the northern arm of the river, and at one o'clock Charles Churchill, Marlborough's brother, whom he had made a Brigadier, with fifteen hundred English infantry, headed by many noblemen and gentlemen volunteers, plunged into the estuary. The water, though ebbing, was breast-high, the current strong, and the fire from the ramparts heavy. But both Danes and English advanced undaunted and occupied the counterscarp. As they re-formed here for the final storm McElligott hoisted the white flag. In view of his trick of the day before, no terms were offered. What was left of the garrison, about four thousand men, became prisoners of war. Marlborough entered the city the next day, and sternly suppressed the looting which had begun.¹

The world of those days was small, and many intimate ties existed across the fronts of war. After the departure of Tyrconnel the Duke of Berwick, now nineteen, commanded what was left of James's adherents in Ireland. He approached with a force of five or six thousand men as near as he dared to the city, hoping to extricate the garrison ; but the quality of

¹ Another of William's letters to Marlborough is of interest.

"A KENSINGTON

"*cc 4/14 Oct. 1690*

* "Vous pouvez croire comme j'ay este rejoui de la prise de Cork, vous en felicitez aussi pour la part que vous y avez dont je vous remercie, j'espere que j'apprendrez bien tost le meme heureux succes de Kingsale, Et que je vous revoie en peu en parfaite sante. A l'egard des Prisonniers que vous avez fait a Cork l'on dit qu'il y a une Isle aupres, ou l'on les pouroit garder seurement. Et quoy qu'ils me couteront beaucoup en pain, cette depense est inevitable, jusques a ce que j'en puis disposer autrement et que je ne puis faire si tost, soyez tousjour assure de la continuation de Mon Amitie."

Marlborough le 4th Oct. 1690.

Vous pouvez voir comme j'ay offert pour la
prise de Cork vous en eussiez aussi pour la prise
que vous avez eue. Je vous remercie, j'espère que
j'appréhenderai bientôt de me voir dans la place
de Kinsale, et que je vous verrai en peu
en parfaite santé. A l'égard des Espagnols
que vous avez fait à Cork, l'on dit qu'il y a une forte
armée, ou l'on les pourroit y aller chercher, et que
qu'ils ne courent beaucoup en vain, cette espérance
est insupportable jusqu'à ce que j'en puis offrir
autrement et que je ne puisse s'en aller. Je vous
souhaitte encore de la continuation de Mon Amie.

William R.

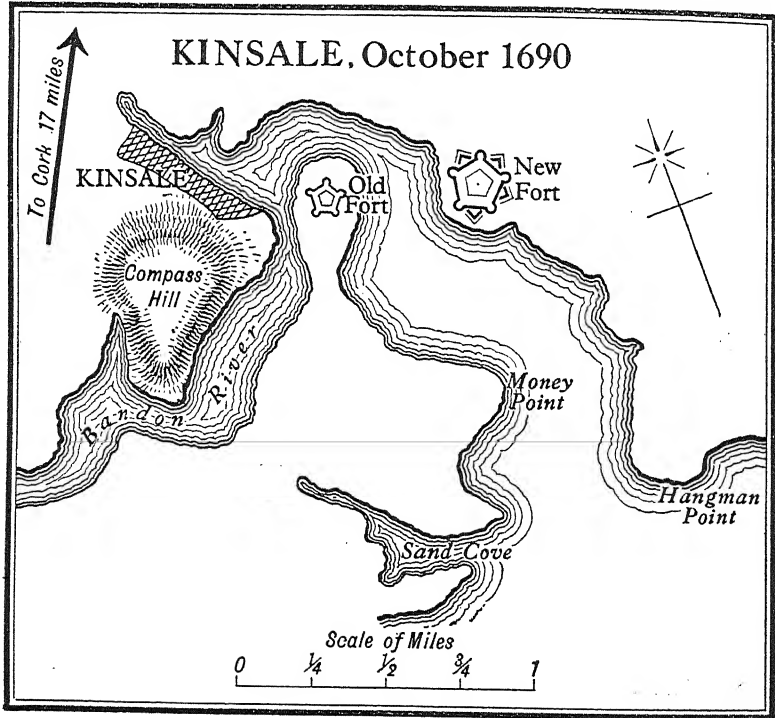
his troops did not permit him to intervene. He was the spectator, by no means for the last time, of his uncle's success. Although their lives lay on opposite sides, they both felt the bond of kinship, corresponded in a manner which would not be tolerated in any modern war, and admired each other's growing military repute.

There was another reminder of the jovial times. While Arabella's son by James II hung upon the outskirts of Marlborough's army, the Duke of Grafton, Barbara's son by Charles II, had fallen in the forefront of the attack. He was but twenty-six, and cherished the warmest sentiments of friendship and admiration for his mother's old lover. Together they had plotted against James; together they had quitted the camp at Salisbury; together they had restored order among Feversham's disbanded troops. William, wrongly suspecting Charles II's bastard of Jacobite inclinations and offended by his vote for a regency, had deprived him of his regiment, the 1st Guards, but gave him instead a man-of-war. In this ship, the *Grafton*, the Duke had carried Marlborough from Portsmouth, and, landing with six hundred seamen, had planted the besieging batteries. Exposing himself with his customary bravery when trying to advance some of his guns, he received a wound of which he died eleven days later. "I die contented," he said with dignity at the end, "but I should be more satisfied were I leaving my country in a happier and more tranquil state." He will best be remembered for his answer to James, who, irritated at his remonstrating with him about Popery, had exclaimed, "What have you to say about it? You have no conscience." "I may have no conscience," replied Grafton, "but I belong to a party which has plenty."

From Cork Marlborough, without an hour's delay, turned to Kinsale, and the very next day his cavalry summoned the two forts which guarded the harbour to surrender. The town, which was undefended, was seized before it could be burned, thus affording the necessary shelter for the troops. Marlborough arrived himself on Thursday, October 1, by which time considerable infantry forces had entered the town.

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He saw at once that the "New Fort" was much stronger than had been reported and if defended would require a regular siege. The governor, Sir Edward Scott, rejected the very favourable conditions that were offered, and, treating with contempt the threat that he would be hanged if he put the assailants to the trouble of a formal siege, addressed himself



to a stubborn defence. The "Old Fort" was less well equipped, and Marlborough decided to attempt its storm. Tettau, the Dane, at the head of eight hundred men, was chosen for this rough task. At dawn on the Friday the assault was delivered. The garrison proved three times as numerous as had been reported, but after a fierce and bloody fight the place was carried. A hundred Irish were killed and two hundred taken prisoners.

Undeterred by this example, Scott refused a renewed summons to surrender, answering coolly that he might

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consider it in another month. Trenches were opened forthwith, and by October 7 the English and Danes had sapped almost to the counterscarp. On the 11th the heavy batteries, transported with the utmost difficulty over the appalling roads from Cork, began their bombardment, and by the 15th a breach was pronounced ready for assault. Sarsfield, whose cavalry were in the neighbourhood, was not able to help the defenders, and the intrepid governor felt that enough was done for honour. He therefore opened negotiations, and Marlborough, whose trenches were knee-deep in water and who was worried by the approach of winter and fearful for the health of his troops, was glad to give him generous terms. Scott was allowed to march off to Limerick with his twelve hundred survivors under the customary compliments of war. But "as the enemy marched out, the Earl took a note of all their names, telling them that if ever they were hereafter in arms against King William, they should have no quarter."¹ The siege had cost Marlborough 250 men, and the hospitals were already crowded with sick. A hundred pieces of cannon and much military supplies fell to the victors. But this was the least part of the success. The capture of these southern harbours deprived Irish resistance of all hope of French succour, and rendered the entire reduction of the country possible as soon as the winter was over. Charles Churchill was appointed governor of Kinsale, and Marlborough's army went into winter quarters. He himself landed at Deal on October 28, having accomplished what he had planned and guaranteed with complete success.

He was extremely well received in London. "In twenty-three days," says Lord Wolseley, "Marlborough had achieved more than all William's Dutch commanders had done both in Ireland and abroad during the whole of the previous year."² "In the matter of skill," says Fortescue,³ "the quiet and unostentatious captures of Cork and Kinsale in 1690 were far the most brilliant achievements of the war." William was most gracious : but the patronizing compliment

¹ Le Fleming Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 301, News-letter of November 1, 1690.

² *ii*, 216.

³ *History of the British Army*, i, 350.

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he paid was characteristic of the Dutch attitude towards British generals. "No officer living," he said, "*who has seen so little service as my Lord Marlborough*,"¹ is so fit for great commands." Was Churchill's service, then, so scanty? Tangier, Sole Bay, Maestricht, at least two campaigns under Turenne, Sedgemoor, and now this very year Walcourt and Cork, certainly constituted a record of varied experience, of hard fighting and invariable good conduct by land and sea, in almost every rank from an ensign to a Lieutenant-General in independent command.

Marlborough did not return to Ireland, as some writers aver. We find him dining in January with Lord Lucas, Constable of the Tower, and ordering £100 to be distributed among "the poor Irish taken at Cork and Kinsale."² He certainly desired to have the chief command in Ireland in the campaign of 1691, and public opinion expected it. But it was no part of William's policy to let English soldiers gather laurels. The closing scenes in Ireland were reserved for Ginkel, while Marlborough, at the head of the British contingent in Flanders, was to make the campaign as one of the generals of the large army William had determined to command in person. He no doubt appreciated the kindness of the King in thus repairing the deficiencies of his military education; and his experiences in this campaign must at least have had the value of showing him some methods of war to be avoided.

The years 1689 and 1690 now lie exposed before us, and what was mystery to the actors is obvious to posterity. William had "taken England on his way to France"; James had looked upon Ireland as a stepping-stone to England. Although propagating the Catholic religion played so large a part in French policy, the times were too serious for excessive zeal. Attacked upon all sides by the coalition of Europe, Louis had to lay hold of material resources and attune his affairs to the severely practical requirements of self-preservation. James had therefore been instructed by the French Government, and was himself entirely disposed, to gather all

¹ Author's italics.

² Luttrell, *Relation*, ii, 167.

Ireland to himself by an even-handed policy fair to Protestant and Catholic alike and thus prepare for his return to England. But the Irish people and army who welcomed him with so much enthusiasm knew little and recked less of these larger aspects of the Continental problem. They wanted to trample down the Protestants and take back the lands stolen from the monasteries at the Reformation and from their forefathers by Cromwell. They sought to return definitely to the old fifteenth-century position and to blot out altogether the events which had since occurred. In fact, they demanded then what they seek to-day—an independent Catholic establishment with the land in the possession of its original owners, subject only to the tribal and ancient customs of rural life in primitive communities. They took little interest in James's larger plans of recovering the English crown, and still less in Louis's dreams of French ascendancy throughout the world. In 1689 both William in England and James in Ireland found themselves gravely embarrassed by the smaller and more local views intensely held by the populations whose respective champions they sought and seemed to be. To William England was a somewhat sluggish recruit for an anti-French coalition. To James Ireland was a stage upon which he must pose effectively before an English audience. To Louis England and Ireland were areas which must be thrown into sufficient disorder to improve the military situation on the challenged frontiers of France. Thus, much confusion arose on all sides; but in the end the main antagonisms of Europe predominated. The supreme duel of William *versus* Louis and of Europe *versus* France drew all other passionate interests into its vortex, and all subsidiary divergent issues, although they produced an infinity of perplexity and suffering, were drilled, cudgelled, disciplined, and forced to range themselves in one line or the other of the general war.

CHAPTER XX
THE PERSONAL CLEAVAGE

(1690-1691)

TO understand history the reader must always remember how small is the proportion of what is recorded to what actually took place, and above all how severely the time factor is compressed. Years pass with chapters and sometimes with pages, and the tale abruptly reaches new situations, changed relationships, and different atmospheres. Thus the figures of the past are insensibly portrayed as more fickle, more harlequin, and less natural in their actions than they really were. But if anyone will look back over the last three or four years of his own life or of that of his country, and pass in detailed review events as they occurred and the successive opinions he has formed upon them, he will appreciate the pervading mutability of all human affairs. Combinations long abhorred become the order of the day. Ideas last year deemed inadmissible form the pavement of daily routine. Political antagonists make common cause and, abandoning old friends, find new. Bonds of union die with the dangers that created them. Enthusiasm and success give place to resentment and reaction. The popularity of Governments departs as the too bright hopes on which it was founded fade into normal and general disappointment. But all this seems natural to those who live through a period of change. All men and all events are moving forward together in a throng. Each individual decision is the result of all the forces at work at any given moment, and the passage of even a few years enables—nay, compels—men and peoples to think, feel, and act quite differently without any insincerity or baseness.

Thus we have seen our England, maddened by the Popish Plot into Test Acts and Exclusion Bills, placing after a few years a Popish sovereign on the throne with general acclama-

tion. We have seen her also, angered by his offences, unseat him by an almost universal shrug of the shoulders and set the island crown upon the brow of a foreign prince. And now we shall see a very strong reaction which arose against that Prince or Parliamentary King and cast gleams of public favour upon the true King over the water. The possibility of the return of James could never be absent from the minds of those who had been witnesses of the miracle of the restoration of Charles. Moreover, many of the reasons which had led to the expulsion of James had disappeared. A new Constitution had established the power of Parliament and limited effectually the prerogative and authority of the Crown. No one could doubt that if James returned it would be as the result of a bargain which consolidated the principles of a limited monarchy and upheld beyond the chance of challenge the Protestant character of the English people. Those who write with crude censure of the shame of deserting James for William or William for James seem to forget that James and William were not ends in themselves. They were the instruments by which the power and happiness of England might be gained or marred. The loyalties due to their kingly office or hereditary titles were not the only loyalties to which English statesmen had a right and duty to respond. There was, for instance, the interest of the country, to which an increasingly conscious loyalty was due. In those days, as in these, men were by character true or false; but unswerving fidelity to a particular king was no test of their virtue or baseness.

The events of the Revolution had created conditions in England to which no parallel exists in later times. Many of the magnates who had dethroned and expelled James still revered him in their hearts, in spite of all the Acts of Parliament they had passed, as their real, natural sovereign. Every one regarded the imperious and disagreeable Dutchman who had had to be brought in and set up for the sake of Protestantism and civil liberty as a necessary evil. They saw his dislike and contempt for Englishmen. They understood that he regarded England mainly as a powerful tool for

his Continental schemes, conceived primarily in the interest of Holland. With anxious eyes they watched his unpopularity increasing with the growth of taxes and distress through long years of war rarely lighted by success. The danger of his death from natural causes, from assassination or upon the battlefield, where he so often bravely exposed himself, and the grave constitutional issues which would renew themselves upon such an event, were ever present to their minds. Devoted to the Protestant faith, and determined that the English Constitution should not sink to a despotism upon the French model, they none the less had to take into account the possible pursuance of their objects under violently and suddenly changed conditions. It was not wonderful that they should have acted upon the ancient Greek maxim, "Love as though you shall hereafter hate, and hate as though you shall hereafter love." It was an epoch of divided loyalties, of conflicting interests, of criss-cross ties, of secret reserves and much dissembling. When kings forswear their oaths of duty and conspire against their peoples, when rival kings or their heirs crowd the scene, statesmen have to pick and choose between sovereigns of fluctuating values, as kings are wont to pick and choose between politicians according to their temporary serviceableness. The conditions and standards of this period, like its tests and stresses, were different from our own. Nevertheless, as we contend, the main feature which emerges is that of steadfastness and not deceit, of patriotism above self-interest, and of courage and earnestness, rather than of craft and opportunism.

Through all these baffling changes, of which only the barest outline can be realized by posterity, Halifax seems to have threaded his way with truer hold upon the essential interest of England than any other figure of whom we have record. We have seen him a Protestant opponent of the Exclusion Bill and a Minister of James II. We have seen him an opponent of James II. We have seen him harshly conducting that fallen sovereign to Rochester. We have seen him the trusted counsellor of William III. We shall soon see him reopening his relations with the exiled James. No one

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but a blind partisan of the Whig or Tory factions of those vanished days would find it impossible to vindicate all these successive and superficially inconsistent actions of Halifax as being both sincere and in the public interest. On the whole throughout this long, tempestuous period Marlborough, as we have seen, moved politically with Halifax. His broad outlook upon affairs, his sane and reasonable temperament, his indifference towards the two parties, his hatred of excess or revenge, his antagonism to France, his adherence to the Protestant cause, all conform to the Halifax type, and step by step his actions harmonize with those of the illustrious 'Trimmer.'

Longer than any other race in the world the English have exercised the right or power of dismissing a Government of which they have tired, and in the main our civilization has gained by this process. But in the days when party leaders were rival kings, when dislike of bad government was disloyalty, when resistance to a misguided king was treason, the ordinary transactions of modern political life wore a dire and sinister aspect. It was not possible to take part in public affairs without giving solemn oaths, nor to address the royal personage who was the party-leader except in the obsequious and adulatory terms which are still conventional. Not merely exclusion from public office, but confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and possibly death overhung all who were found on the losing side in any of the convulsions of State. In consequence public men often endeavoured when possible to minimize their risks and to mitigate for themselves and their families the consequences of a dynastic change. No such anxieties beset the Victorians or trouble us to-day. All our fundamentals have been for many generations securely established. The prizes of public life have diminished; its risks have been almost entirely removed. High office now means not the road to riches, but in most cases financial sacrifice. Power under the Crown passes from hand to hand with smooth decorum. The 'Ins' and 'Outs' take their turn in His Majesty's Government and in His Majesty's Opposition usually without a thought of personal vengeance, and often

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without a ruffle of private friendship. But are we really so sure that the statesmen of the twentieth century are entitled to sit in judgment upon those of the seventeenth? The age is gentler, the personal stakes and the players themselves are smaller, but the standard is not always so far superior that we should watch with unshakable confidence our modern political leaders subjected to the strains of Halifax, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, or Marlborough.

We must now look more closely upon the extraordinary Prince who for good reasons and in the general interest had robbed his father-in-law of his throne. From his earliest years William's circumstances had been harsh and sombre. His life was loveless. He was always fatherless and childless. His marriage was dictated by reasons of State. He was brought up by his termagant grandmother, Amalia of Solms, and in his youth was passed for regulation from one Dutch committee to another. His childhood was unhappy and his health bad. He had a tubercular lung, was asthmatic and partly crippled. But within this emaciated and defective frame there burned a remorseless fire, fanned by the storms of Europe, and intensified by the stern compression of his surroundings. His great actions began before he was twenty-one. From that age he had fought constantly in the field and toiled through every intrigue of Dutch domestic politics and of the European scene. For the last four years he had been the head of the English conspiracy against James.

Women meant little to him. For a long time he treated his loving, faithful wife with much severity. As a husband he was arbitrary without being uxorious. He was at once exacting and cold. Mary's life in Holland for ten years was narrow and restricted. William fenced her about with Dutch attendants and chased away even her English chaplain. She had to be taught to look at the world entirely through his eyes, and not to see too much through them. Bishop Ken's account of this period is not pleasant reading. Although the witty Elizabeth Villiers (afterwards Lady Orkney) upheld the family tradition by becoming his titular mistress, he was certainly not

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a squire of dames. Later on, towards the end of his reign, when he saw how much Mary had helped him in the English sphere of his policy, he was sincerely grateful to her, as to a faithful friend or Cabinet officer who had maintained the Government. His grief at her death was unaffected.

In religion he was, of course, a Calvinist; but he does not seem to have derived much spiritual solace from these forbidding doctrines. In practice as a sovereign and commander he was entirely without religious prejudices. No agnostic could have displayed more philosophic impartiality. Protestant, Catholic, Jew, or infidel were all the same to him. He dreaded and hated Gallican Catholicism less because it was to him idolatrous than because it was French; he employed Catholic officers without hesitation when they would serve his purpose. He used religious questions as counters in his political combinations. While he beat the Protestant drum in England and Ireland, he had potent influence with the Pope, with whom his relations were at all times a model of comprehending statesmanship. It almost seemed that a being had been created for the sole purpose of resisting the domination of France and the Great King. His public hatred of France and his personal quarrel with Louis XIV constituted the main theme of his life. All his exertions were directed against the tyrant who had not only compassed the ruin of the Dutch Republics, but had actually seized and dragooned the small principality of Orange from which he had sprung, and with which his native pride and affections were interwoven.

It was the natural characteristic of such an upbringing and of such a mission that William should be ruthless. Although he did not conspire in the murder of the de Witts, he rejoiced at it, profited by it, and protected and pensioned the murderers. His conduct in the Massacre of Glencoe was entirely unfeeling. Neither the treachery nor the butchery of that crime disturbed his cynical serenity. He was vexed and worried only about the outcry that arose afterwards. He would break a political opponent without pity, but he was never needlessly cruel, and was glad to treat foes no longer

dangerous with contempt or indifference. He wasted no time on minor revenges. His sole vendetta was with Louis. For all his experience from his youth at the head of armies and for all his dauntless heart, he was never a great commander. He had not a trace of that second-sight of the battlefield which is the mark of military genius. He was no more than a resolute man of good common sense whom the accident of birth had carried to the conduct of war. It was in the sphere of politics that his inspiration lay. Perhaps he has never been surpassed in the sagacity, patience, and discretion of his statecraft. The combinations he made, the difficulties he surmounted, the adroitness with which he used the time factor, or played upon the weakness of others, the unerring sense of proportion and power of assigning to objectives their true priorities, all mark him for the highest fame.

William watched with ill-concealed disfavour the protracted wranglings of the English chiefs and parties. His paramount interest was in the great war now begun throughout Europe and in the immense confederacy he had brought into being. He despised the insularity and lack of vision, as it seemed to him, of those over whom he was now to rule. He had regarded the English expedition as a divagation, a duty necessary but tiresome, which had to be accomplished for a larger purpose. He grudged the delays which held him in London, and later in Ireland, from the decisive theatre of world events. He was never fond of England, nor interested in her domestic affairs. Her seamy side was all he knew. He repeatedly urged Parliament to address itself to the Continental situation. He required the wealth and power of England by land and sea for the European war. It was for this he had come in person to enlist her. Although he had himself darkly and deviously conspired the undoing of his foolish kinsman, he thought little of the English public men who had been his confederates. A prince himself, he could not but distrust men who, albeit at his instigation, had been guilty of treason to their royal master. He knew too much about their jealousies and intrigues to cherish for them sentiments of liking or respect. He had used them for his own

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ends, and would reward them for their services ; but as a race he regarded them as inferior in fibre and fidelity to his Dutchmen. English statesmen to him were perjured, and what was even worse, local-minded. English soldiers seemed to him uncouth and ill-trained by Continental standards. English generals lacked the professional knowledge which, he believed, long experience of war alone could give. The English Navy was no doubt brave and hardy, but his own sentiments naturally rested upon the traditions of Tromp and de Ruyter. The Dutch were his children ; the English could never be more than his step-children, to whom, indeed, he owed a parental duty and from whose estate he was entitled during his guardianship to draw substantial advantages.

Once securely seated on the throne he scarcely troubled to disguise these sentiments. A Jacobite observer, General Dillon, who as a page at this time had good opportunities, has recorded that in 1689

he never saw English noblemen dine with the Prince of Orange, but only the Duke of Schomberg who was always placed at his right hand and his Dutch general officers. The English noblemen that were there stood behind the Prince of Orange's chair but never were admitted to eat and sit.

The Earls of Marlborough and Clarendon were often in attendance, but "were dismissed when the dinner was half over." Dillon says that he was there for several days before he ever heard the Prince of Orange speak a word at table. On his asking his companion page, the young, handsome Keppel, whether he never spoke, Keppel replied "that he talked enough at night over his bottle when he was got with his friends."¹ It was not surprising that these manners, and still more the mood from which they evidently arose, gave deep offence. For the English, although submissive to the new authority of which they had felt the need, were as proud and haughty as any race in Europe. No one relishes being an object of aversion and contempt, especially when these affronts are unstudied, spontaneous, and sincere. The great nobles and

¹ Macpherson, *Original Papers*, i, 284 (based on Carte's memorandum of an actual conversation with Dillon in 1724).

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Parliamentarians who had made the Revolution and were still rigidly set upon its purpose could not but muse upon the easy gaiety and grace of the Court of Charles II. They remembered that James, with all his political faults, had the courtesy and dignity which distinguished the later Stuarts. Politics apart, they soon began wistfully to look back to the days when they had a king of their own.

The King's unsociable disposition, his greediness at table, his silence and surliness in company, his dislike of women, his neglect of London, all prejudiced him with polite society. The ladies voted him "a low Dutch bear." The English Army too was troubled in its soul. Neither officers nor men could dwell without a sense of humiliation upon the military aspects of the Revolution. They did not like to see all the most important commands entrusted to Dutchmen. They eyed sourly the Dutch infantry who paced incessantly the sentry-beats of Whitehall and St James's, and contrasted their shabby blue uniforms and small stature with the scarlet pomp of the 1st Guards and Coldstreamers now banished from London. It was a pity, thought they, that the public interest had not allowed them to give these fellows a drubbing.

It is curious indeed that the English statesman who most commanded the new King's confidence and enjoyed his intimacy was the one who least deserved it. Sunderland had fled to Holland when King James's power collapsed, in fear apparently of Catholic vengeance for having led his master to ruin. We have found at Blenheim one of his few surviving letters. It is of interest for the light it casts both upon his own position and upon his relations with Churchill. He wrote to Churchill from Rotterdam on December 19, 1688 :

*After the long friendship we have had and our manner of living for many years, I can not doubt but you will contribute what you can to make things easy for a man in my condition ; therefore it is not necessary for me to write at this time. But, my wife going into England, I would not omit putting you in mind of me and begging you will assist her and always wanting money and never so much as now. If she speakes to you for the George and Garter which I desired you or My Lady Churchill would

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keep for me, pray give them to her. This I think was unnecessary but so are many other things I do, particularly my going away ; for when I saw you last and a great while before, I apprehended nothing but from the Papists. I hope I was in the right and that it is so still.

It seems incredible that one so exposed in character and discredited in counsel should regain a foremost position in the country he had served so queerly. Yet within two years this Papist recusant who had contrived at the same moment to be false to England and to King James, while drawing a salary from France and intriguing with William, found himself in the highest favour of the Protestant deliverer, became the chief influence in the forming of Cabinets, and was soon again the most intimate adviser of the Crown. Castlereagh in another century was to justify his support of Talleyrand after Waterloo on the grounds that the French were a nation of criminals and that the biggest criminal was most capable of managing them. A similar reasoning seems to have drawn William to Sunderland. His only other English favourite was Henry Sidney, whose influence and affluence were a cause of comment. For the rest his well-proved Dutch or foreign friends were the recipients of the royal bounty. Bentinck became Earl of Portland, Zulestein Earl of Rochford, Ruvigny Earl of Galway, old Schomberg Duke of Schomberg,¹ young Schomberg Duke of Leinster ; and all were enriched by well-paid offices and large estates granted them from the Crown lands.

Cracks had speedily appeared in the fabric of the original National Government. The Whigs considered that the Revolution belonged to them. All they had suffered since their far-seeing Exclusion Bills, all that they had risked in the great conspiracy, should now be rewarded. Their judgment, their conduct, their principles, had been vindicated. Ought they not, then, to have all the offices ? Was it just they should be thrust aside in many cases for the " evil counsellors of the late king " ? But William knew that he could never have gained the crown of England but by the help of the Cavaliers and Anglicans who formed the staple of the Tory Party.

¹ Killed at the Boyne in 1690.

Moreover at this time, as a king he liked the Tory mood. Here was a party who exalted the authority of the Crown. Here was a Church devoted to hereditary monarchy and profoundly grieved to have been driven by the crisis from the doctrine of non-resistance. William felt that Whig principles would ultimately lead to a republic. Under the name of Stadtholder he was really the King of Holland; he had no desire under the name of King to be only Stadtholder of England. He was therefore ready to break up the convention Parliament which had given him the crown while, as the Whigs said, "its work was all unfinished." At the election of February 1690 "the buried names of Whig and Tory revived"; and the Tories won. Henceforward the party cleavage and party system became rigid, formal, and—down to our own days—permanent.

There was, moreover, a moderate view. Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Marlborough, and Sunderland, and from a somewhat different angle Halifax, now ageing, held a middle position apart from party, and, as they no doubt thought, above it. "Their notion of party," writes Mr Feiling,

was to use both or either of the factions to keep themselves well above water, and to further the royal service. For this last part should not be forgotten; if they could go to any lengths to ensure their own future, three of them could in an emergency, if the nation's interests at the moment happened to coincide with their own, shew magnificent patriotism and industry.¹

Each of these men drew in others. "Shrewsbury was usually hand in glove with Wharton. Godolphin and Marlborough shared confidences with Russell."² It was upon this central body of men, pre-eminent for their gifts, unrivalled in experience of affairs and knowledge of the Court and Parliament, that William was naturally inclined to rely either as counsellors or Ministers, and he added thoroughpaced Whigs or Tories in different proportions to either flank to suit the changing needs of the years.

But the King's affairs moved inevitably in a vicious circle. He could not trust high military authority to Englishmen, nor allow English soldiers to win fame in the field, without, as he

¹ P. 282.

² P. 281.

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thought, placing himself in their power. In all the key posts of the Army he must have Dutchmen or foreigners. Thus he angered the English officers and the English Army, and found new justification for his distrust in their resentment. Most of all this cycle prejudiced the relations between him and Marlborough. Marlborough's desire was above everything to command armies in the great war now raging. He felt within himself qualities which, if they had their chance, would produce remarkable results for himself, for England, and for Europe. But though William desired the same political ends, he feared their being gained by Marlborough. He remembered General Monk; he remembered what had happened at Salisbury. Therefore it became with him a necessary principle of his existence to bar Marlborough's natural and legitimate professional career. The abler general Marlborough showed himself, the more he must be kept in a subordinate station; the greater his talents the more imperative their repression.

Marlborough was made to realize all this, and perhaps its inevitability, at the beginning of 1691. He had rendered immense and even decisive services to the new régime both in the crisis of the Revolution and during the Revolution settlement. His had been almost the only military achievements of 1690. The charge at Walcourt, the swift seizure of Cork and Kinsale, were outstanding episodes. It was variously rumoured in London that he would be created a Duke and Knight of the Garter, would be appointed Master-General of the Ordnance, and would be commander-in-chief in Ireland for the coming campaign. A dukedom he considered beyond his means, and he was to refuse one ten years later on the same grounds; but we know from letters which Anne and her husband wrote to the King that he desired the Garter. He wanted the Ordnance to support his title; and above all he sought an independent command in one of the theatres of war. He found himself denied on all points. The Ordnance went to Henry Sidney, a civilian who was destitute of any qualifications of which history can take notice. Ginkel had the command in Ireland, and Waldeck, in spite of Fleurus,

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had, under the King, the command in Flanders. Of course Marlborough ought not to have minded such treatment. He ought to have been indifferent, like our modern generals, statesmen, and financiers, to personal ambitions or material interests. However, he took it all very much amiss. He seems to have come to the conclusion that William meant to keep him down. Under James he saw his path blocked by Papists: under William by Dutchmen.

The campaign of 1691 opened in imposing style with a conference at The Hague. A league of nations assembled to concert measures against the common enemy, France. England, Holland, Prussia, the German states, the Empire, Spain, and a dozen smaller powers—all sent their representatives. Such a gathering of princes and statesmen had scarcely been seen before in Christendom. At the summit stood William in all his glory, the architect of this immense confederation of rival states and conflicting faiths, the sovereign of its two most vigorous nations, the chief commander of its armies, lacking nothing but the military art. This splendid ceremonial was rudely interrupted by the cannon. It was scarcely etiquette to begin operations before April or May; but early in March Louis XIV, with Luxembourg as his general and Vauban as his engineer, suddenly appeared with a hundred thousand men before the valuable barrier fortress of Mons. William was forced to descend from his pedestal and mount his horse. He could muster an army of barely fifty thousand, and these could only be spectators of the fall of Mons. So much for the Hague conference.

Marlborough had been left in England charged with the task of recruitment for the Army. We have a letter which shows that he was on bad terms with Danby, but still on good terms with the King.¹

WHITEHALL

February 17, 1691

I here send your Majesty a copy of what we have done concerning the recruits. I must at the same time take leave to tell

¹ Dalrymple, iii, Part II, 247.

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your Majesty that I am tired out of my life with the unreasonable way of proceeding of [the] Lord President, for he is very ignorant what is fit for an officer, both as to recruits and everything else as to a soldier ; so that when I have given such as I think necessary orders, he does what he thinks fit, and enters into the business of tents, arms, and the off-reckonings, which were all settled before your Majesty left England, so that at this rate business is never done ; but I think all this proceeds from, I hope, the unreasonable prejudice he has taken against me, which makes me incapable of doing you that service which I do with all my heart, and should wish to do, for I do with much truth wish both your person and Government to prosper. I hope it will not be long before your Majesty will be here, after which I shall beg never to be in England when you are not.

In May the allied forces took the field with the object at least of recovering Mons. William gave Marlborough the command of the British contingent, and to make the necessary vacancy moved Tollemache to Ireland, to serve under Ginkel. Marlborough and Count Solms were sent forward to organize the assembly of the main army in the neighbourhood of Brussels. Waldeck commanded while William rested awhile in his home palace at Loo. Luxembourg, with a solid French army, barred the way to Mons. At the end of June William arrived at headquarters, and the campaign began in earnest. It was the first time since the reign of Henry VIII that a King of England had commanded in person on the Continent, and all the young bloods of quality and fashion had hurried from London to let off their pistols. But nothing happened. Luxembourg stood on the defensive in positions too well chosen for William to attack. The great armies marched and counter-marched according to the orthodox rules of war, and the precious summer months slipped away. By the end of August all was over. William, baffled and a trifle humiliated, led his armies back to their cantonments. They passed on their way the field of Fleurus, where the grisly spectacle of Waldeck's unburied corpses struck a chill through a disappointed host. William handed over the command to Waldeck and returned to Loo.

But the adversities of the campaign were not yet ended.

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In the middle of September, when custom should have enforced upon Luxembourg the propriety of retiring into winter quarters, he organized an outrageous cavalry attack upon the rearguard of the allied army while it was moving from Leuze to Grammont. The rising French officer Villars routed the Dutch cavalry and sabred them from the field. The confusion spread to the infantry. The sudden heavy firing rang through the autumn air. There was a tumult of scampering horses and men. Marlborough, marching in his station with the British contingent, had already passed the Catoise stream. He turned sharply back and marched towards the bridges at the utmost speed, apparently in the mood for battle. A broad flush of red and steel spread menacingly across the landscape. But Luxembourg, cool and composed in the cavalry action and content with the day, disengaged his excited army before the British brigades could deploy; and the fighting of the year ended for the allies upon this somewhat ridiculous incident, in which there were, however, above seven hundred casualties.¹ The Prince of Waldeck led the discomfited Dutch and angry English into their winter quarters; and in all their camps and garrisons the word ran round that King William had "entered the field too late, and quitted it too soon."

We have two sketches of our hero in the setting of these unsatisfactory affairs. The first, at William's headquarters, rests on the account of the Pensionary Heinsius, afterwards Marlborough's greatest standby in Holland. The King asked the Prince of Vaudemont what he thought of his English generals. Although Marlborough had had no opportunity of handling the troops in the field, his personality, his organizing and administrative powers, and his part in council had produced an impression. Vaudemont is said to have answered in these words: "Kirke has fire, Lanier thought, Mackay skill, and Colchester bravery; but there is something inexpressible in the Earl of Marlborough. All their virtues seem to be united in his single person. I have lost," he added emphatically, "my wonted skill in physiognomy, if any

¹ Cf. Carstares to Lord Polwarth, Loo, September 17, 1691, *H.M.C.*, XIV, iii, 123.

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subject of your Majesty can ever attain such a height of military glory as that to which this combination of sublime perfections must raise him." "Cousin," said King William, who was never incapable of discerning unwelcome truths, "you have done your part in answering my question, and I believe the Earl of Marlborough will do his to verify your prediction."¹

The second glimpse—one of the very few which reveal Marlborough's enthusiasm—we owe to the Comte de Dohna. The armies had been drawn up at Beaumont in the hope of battle. The British were in their full array.

"We had become acquainted," writes the Prussian general, and as between soldiers, especially on such an occasion, it is customary to talk shop, Marlborough showed me his English, smart troops and brisk. He asked me if I did not believe them invincible and whether with such men were we not sure to beat the French? "Sir," I said, "you may see on the other side troops who believe themselves apparently equally invincible, and if that be so, there is clearly a conflict of opinion."²

This was an issue which was not to be settled for some time.

It was a heavy exertion for the states of those days, with their narrow finances, to keep such large armies in contact with an equal enemy for a whole season. The loss of a year weighed heavily on the fragile structure of the Grand Alliance. All William's skill in diplomacy had come to nothing at the point of action. John Churchill was then forty-three, in his prime. He possessed all the military knowledge and experience upon which he afterwards acted. As he watched those infirm yet stilted manœuvres, as he brooded on these wasted opportunities, as he no doubt felt how surely and how swiftly he could reshape the scene, and yet how carefully and tightly trammelled he was, can we wonder at the anger that possessed his soul? There was no prophetic spirit at his side to whisper, "Patience! The opportunity will yet be yours." His patience is almost proverbial. He had need for it all. Ten years, half of them years of war—ten years when the chances of a lifetime seemed finally to die—were to pass before he was again to exercise a military command.

¹ *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals.*

² Christophe de Dohna, *Mémoires Originaux* (1883), pp. 151-152.

CHAPTER XXI

KING JAMES'S MEMOIRS

HISTORY cannot proceed by silences. The chronicler of ill-recorded times has none the less to tell his tale. If facts are lacking, rumour must serve. Failing affidavits, he must build with gossip. Everything is relative. One doubtful fact has to be weighed against another. A rogue's testimony is better than no evidence. A forged letter, if ancient, is at least to be preferred to mere vacuity. Authentic documents and credible witnesses may be sought with perseverance; but where they do not exist the less trustworthy understudies who present themselves must be suffered, often without the proper apologies and reserves, to play the major parts, if the drama is to be presented at all. "Marry! this is something," and something at any rate is better than nothing. But when the process is complete, when every vestige of knowledge, such as it is, has been gathered, sifted, weighed, and fitted into the story, it may be well to ask whether the result corresponds at all with what actually happened. Listen to the confession of Ranke, most pregnant and fairest of historians.

Some years ago I was reproved with writing history out of scraps. Certainly I do not, so long as detailed informants hold out. But when the originals were either lost, or are kept concealed, it is absolutely necessary to make use of less perfect accounts and fragmentary communications. It is just at such points that cases are wont to occur, which are purposely kept dark and which are among the most important.¹

The historians of two hundred years have generally accepted the view that the leading Englishmen who made the Revolution of 1688 soon afterwards became traitors to the Protestant and constitutional cause. They conspired in the full and treacherous sense of the word against William III.

¹ Ranke, *History of England*, vi, 42.

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They opened a close correspondence with the exiled King, and sought by every form of repentance and atonement to win his forgiveness. They divulged the secrets of the Council, betrayed naval and military war plans, tried to seduce the Army, or to put the fleet out of the way of an invader, and generally plotted to bring about a restoration backed by French bayonets. This they did in their base pursuit of wealth and honours, and to insure these enjoyments, if King James returned. These charges assail in varying degrees, but all effectively, Marlborough, Shrewsbury, Russell, Godolphin, Sunderland, Halifax, and later Somers, together with many other less important figures. If sustained, they depict them all as cheats and villains of the deepest dye. In fact, the types portrayed are those of Chinese mandarins rather than of European statesmen.

It has gratified the self-esteem of succeeding generations to dwell upon the depravity of an earlier and more famous age. However, it seems unlikely that persons in the highest station, devoted to solemn public causes, possessing high capacities and many noble and heroic gifts, should have all been of such shameful character. It is important to see whether what has been written against them is a fair representation of the truth; whether the versions given of their conduct are authoritative, authentic, impartial; whether and how far the evidence is untrustworthy, distorted, exaggerated, or definitely malicious; and whether what remains indisputable has been judged in its proper relation to the circumstances of the time. For this purpose it is necessary to search and test the foundations upon which the enormous and imposing façade of history is supported.

With these preliminaries let us proceed to survey the materials which actually exist. The reader must choose between accepting conclusions and going into the details for himself. The account of the documents is here presented in a simplified form. But most of the statements of fact are supported by a consensus of authorities. Where the authorities are at variance their division of opinion is recorded in the footnotes.

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Apart from the gossip recorded in various English memoirs and contemporary letters, and a few documents in the French archives, the whole of the charge against the Revolution leaders rests upon such records as exist of what the Jacobites at Saint-Germains thought or wrote down about them. There are no holograph letters of any kind in existence. With the notable exception of the Camaret Bay Letter, to which a separate chapter will be devoted, there are not even reputed copies of any of Marlborough's letters. Surely this is remarkable. Whereas King William's archives contain many holograph letters tantamount to treason written to him before the Revolution, and in particular Marlborough's letter of August 4, 1688, the Jacobite records are destitute of any similar original documents. Yet if the object of the conspirators was, as we are assured, to obtain pardons from James in the event of a restoration, it would have been natural for the exiled King to require some compromising gage, such as Churchill had so freely given to William. That Churchill would not have feared to do so can be judged from his action in William's case. If it be true that he begged for "two lines in the King's handwriting" according him his pardon, would it not have been reasonable for James to reply, "Then send me just two lines in yours." We may be sure that if any holograph letters had existed they would have been preserved in the Jacobite archives with jealous care; and would have come down to us through the same channels as many less significant documents. However, there are none. None have come down, because none existed. There remain only the assertions of the Jacobite records. These records are therefore of the utmost interest.

In his early life James II was accustomed to write memoirs and notes of the events with which he was concerned. "He kept," says Burnet, "a constant Journal of all that passed, of which he showed me a great deal." His first wife, who died in 1671, began a Life of her husband "all drawn from his Journal." She showed a volume of her work to Burnet, whom James later on thought of employing to finish it. In his flight from England the

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King managed to save his papers. They were flung into a box and entrusted to the Tuscan Ambassador, who eventually sent them from Leghorn to Saint-Germains. Thirteen years later, on March 24, 1701, James by warrant entrusted "the original Memoirs . . . writ in our own hand" to the custody of Louis Inesse, or Inese (Innes), Principal of the Scots Jesuit College in Paris, and of his successors. On January 22, 1707, his son the Old Pretender signed a warrant for the removal to Saint-Germains for some months of that part of "His Majesty's Memoirs and other papers written in his own hand" which relates to 1678 and later times. On November 9, 1707, he likewise signed a promise to settle one hundred pounds a year within six months of his restoration on the Scots College, "where the original Memoirs and MSS. of our Royal Father are deposited by his especial warrant." Louis Inesse was alive in 1734, and the papers were still in his custody. There is no doubt about the existence of the Memoirs nor where they lay during the whole of the eighteenth century. On the outbreak of the French Revolution the Scots College tried by various channels to send these historical treasures to England for safety. In 1793 it is believed that a Monsieur Charpentier finally undertook the task. He was arrested at Saint-Omer, and his wife, fearing lest the Royal Arms of hostile England on the bindings might be compromising, first buried the volumes in the garden of her house, and later dug them up and burned them. Thus ended the travels of the Memoirs, the only original memoirs "writ in the King's own hand."¹

However, his son the Old Pretender had fortunately caused a detailed biography of his father to be compiled from the Memoirs and other papers. This work in four volumes was also deposited at the Scots College, and rested there for many years side by side with the materials on which it was based and which it largely incorporated. A single sentence typical of many other indications shows that this "Life" was written some time in the first seventeen years of the eighteenth century. "Never child [the Old Pretender] had greater

¹ See, *inter alia*, Stuart Papers, H.M.C., ii, and the introductions to Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, and C. J. Fox, *James II.*

resemblance to his parents both in body and mind than *his present* Majesty has of the *late* King his Father and of the Queen his Mother.”¹

This sentence was evidently written after the death of James II and before that of the Queen. Further minute researches have narrowed the period to between the years 1704 and 1710; and many will think it reasonable to centre it about the year 1707, when, as we have seen, an important section of the documents was brought to Saint-Germains for some months. Thus there were the Memoirs, now defunct, and the *Life*, written after James's death by direction of the Old Pretender.

There has been much more doubt about the authorship of the *Life* than about its date. Some authorities consider it was written by Inesse himself. The other view is that it is the work of a Jacobite gentleman, a clerk at Saint-Germains, named Dicconson. The point is of small importance, but a letter will soon be placed before the reader which proves that Dicconson is the author.

A copy of Dicconson's work found a home with the English Benedictines in Italy, and during the Napoleonic wars was purchased by the Prince of Wales, and with much difficulty and six years of circuitous travel transported to England, where it arrived about the beginning of 1813. It was edited and published in 1816 by the Rev. James Stanier Clarke, historiographer to the Prince of Wales, then become the Regent, as *The Life of James II collected out of Memoirs writ of his own hand*. This is a book of the highest interest and value. In all parts not attributable to James it is extremely well written. It is almost our only window on this sector of the past. It quotes or condenses a portion of the original Memoirs. The rest is the view of a Jacobite Catholic exile serving at the Court of Saint-Germains in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The facts are set forth as the Court at Saint-Germains viewed them and wished them to be believed.

Without hesitation we are told how James when Duke of York in 1669 formed his design for the forcible conversion of

¹ *Life of James II*, p. 195.

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the English people to Rome; the arrangements with Louis, the French money, the seaports to be placed in the hands of trusty Papist governors, the measures to secure a Papist complexion and control of the Army, the cautious acquiescences of King Charles II, the long perseverance for nearly twenty years now by this path, now by that—all are laid bare as performances of the highest virtue. Unconscious of the perfidy to every human engagement, to the laws of England, to the rights of subjects, to the repeated public and royal declarations and professions, and in apparent complete ignorance of the real facts of Charles's secret policy, as we have described them, the tale is told and counted as meritorious.

Here, then, in the Scots Jesuit College in Paris, was the fountain-head; and to that fountain during the eighteenth century a few select persons came from time to time to sip and drink, or even to carry away a beaker or two.

The first of these, a conscientious investigator, Thomas Carte, a clergyman of the Church of England and a devoted adherent of the house of Stuart, had published his *Life of the Duke of Ormonde* in 1736. He then began collecting his materials for writing a history of England after Cromwell, to promote their restoration. He managed to purchase the papers of David Nairne, under-secretary to James II during his exile, and subsequently employed in the household of the Queen. He then applied for permission to make extracts from James's papers in the Scots College. Permission was granted to him in a letter written from Rome by one James Edgar, secretary to the Old Pretender, dated January 10, 1741.

"The King is pleased," ran the letter,

by this post to send directions to Messrs Innes to give you the perusal at the Scots College at Paris of the complete *Life* of the late King his father, *writ by Mr Dicconson in consequence of royal orders*,¹ all taken out of, and supported by the late King's MSS.

Carte's extracts from the archives of the Scots College were duly published. His original transcripts do not exist among

¹ This in itself seems conclusive upon the question of authorship; but further proof is available.

the Carte papers, and historians have disputed whether the extracts were made from the Memoirs or from the *Life*.¹ He did not live to complete his history; but before he died in April 1754 he presented to the Bodleian Library at Oxford the first two instalments of thirty and twenty-six volumes respectively of the manuscripts in the collection of which his life had been largely spent. He left the remainder of his collection to his widow. She sent nine more volumes to the Bodleian in 1757, and bequeathed the rest to her second husband, Mr Nicholas Jernegan, with reversion to the University of Oxford. Jernegan sold the use of these documents for £300 to a certain James Macpherson, who used them for his publication of *Original Papers containing the secret history of Great Britain from the Restoration to the accession of the House of Hanover*. In 1778 Mr Jernegan sold his life interest in the Carte Collection to the University for £50, and the whole mass, aggregating with the previous gift nearly 250 volumes, was deposited in the Bodleian Library. Among these records are the seven volumes usually called "The Nairne Papers," of which more hereafter.

These papers, the fragmentary extracts said to have been made from James's Memoirs, and finally Dicconson's *Life* of James, edited by Clarke, are, virtually, the sole sources of knowledge of all the alleged transactions and communications between the Ministers, soldiers, and sailors of William III and Saint-Germains, and they form the only foundation upon which this part of the history of those times has been built by Macaulay and other famous writers. There is no doubt that these three sources are mainly one. The

¹ Ranke considered that they were made from the Memoirs. "No one has ever," he wrote in 1875, "doubted their authenticity"; and he proceeded to use them as a means of criticizing the value of Clarke's *Life*. He detected several notable differences between the Memoirs and the *Life*, and argued that in all cases the Memoirs, so far as they were represented by Carte's extracts—his only guide—were the more trustworthy. On the other hand, in a commentary on Clarke's *Life* in the *Edinburgh Review* of June 1816, a writer, anonymous but certainly of much learning, claimed to prove that Clarke had only seen the *Life*, and that therefore the extracts had no independent value. He, like Ranke, closely compared passages of Carte's extracts from the Memoirs with Clarke's *Life* based on the Memoirs, coming to the opposite conclusion that Carte had made his extracts only from the *Life*. Finally he relied upon the Edgar letter, quoted above; which in itself appears almost decisive.

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Life claims to be based on the Memoirs. The episodes and transactions recorded in the Nairne Papers, whether great or trivial, are those which figure with disproportionate prominence in the *Life*. Evidently Dicconson had the Nairne Papers before him at the time when he was working up the King's memoirs into the *Life*.

When the historian Hume went to Paris as Secretary to the British Embassy he, though a Protestant, was allowed, on account of his renown, access to the papers in the Scots College, which were perhaps by then no longer so jealously kept secret. In the 1770 edition of his *History* he added in a note that

From the humanity and candour of the Principal of the Scots College in Paris he was admitted to peruse James II's Memoirs, kept there. They amount to several volumes, of small folio, all writ with that Prince's own hand and comprehending the remarkable incidents of his life, from his early youth till near the time of his death.

This is generally accepted as indisputable evidence that the manuscripts which Hume perused were the Memoirs and not the *Life*. But he left behind no transcripts. He surveyed but he kept no record.

We may dismiss briefly, as irrelevant or redundant for our purposes, the labours of James Macpherson. This gentleman, a Tory Member of Parliament and a paid supporter of King George III, having purchased from Mr Jernegan access to Mr Carte's collection of manuscripts, and having read and made extracts of his own from the *Life* in the Scots College, published in 1775 his so-called *Original State Papers*. Macpherson has been proved to have garbled his extracts and to have shown prejudice against the leaders of 1688. His conduct in respect of the Ossian poems, another of his literary exploitations, shows him capable of deliberate, elaborate, and well-executed forgery. Certainly his description of the Nairne Papers as "original" is misleading, and his repeated references to the *Life* as having been "*written in the king's own hand*" are untrue.

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The great Mr Fox, while engaged upon a history of James II, was keenly interested in this controversy and one of the first to probe it. When he visited Paris in 1802, during the fleeting peace of Amiens, he sought out personally the heads of the Scots College. He was soon convinced of one at least of the many lies of which Macpherson stands convicted.

“With respect to Carte’s extract,” he wrote,

I have no doubt but it is faithfully copied ; but on this extract it is necessary to make an observation, which applies to all the rest, both of Carte’s and Macpherson’s, and which leads to the detection of an imposture of the latter, as impudent as Ossian itself.

The extracts are evidently made, not from a journal, but from a narrative ; I have now ascertained beyond all doubt, that there were in the Scotch College two distinct manuscripts, one in James’s own hand consisting of papers of different sizes bound up together, and the other a sort of historical narrative, compiled from the former. The narrative was said to have been revised and corrected, as to style by Dryden the poet (meaning probably Charles Dryden the great poet’s son) and it was not known in the College, whether it was drawn up in James’s life, or by the direction of his son, the Pretender. I doubt whether Carte ever saw the original journal ; but I learn, from undoubted authority that Macpherson never did ; and yet to read his Preface, page 6 and 7 (which pray advert to,) one would have supposed, not only that he had inspected it accurately, but that all *his* extracts at least, if not Carte’s also, were taken from it. Macpherson’s impudence in attempting such an imposture, at a time when almost any man could have detected him, would have been in another man, incredible, if the internal evidence of the extracts themselves against him were not corroborated by the testimony of the principal persons of the College.¹

Macpherson’s credit stands so low that several authorities have suggested that he tampered with the Nairne Papers while they were in his temporary possession. But we have several indications that the bulk of them had been seen by

¹ Charles James Fox to Laing, apud *James II*, introduction.

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other persons before they came into his hands or at least before their publication in 1775.¹

We may, therefore, base ourselves on Carte's collection of the Nairne Papers and on Dicconson's compilation of James's Memoirs and allow Macpherson to pass without further comment from the account.

We have assembled this mass of detail and disputation only for the purpose of sweeping it once for all out of the historical argument. A search of the Stuart papers at Windsor, rendered possible by the gracious permission of his present Majesty, has revealed a letter never before published or noticed by any of the historians of the last two centuries. This letter is written by Mr Thomas Inesse (or Inese), brother to Louis Inesse, and his successor as Principal of the Scots College, in 1740 to the same James Edgar, secretary to the Old Pretender, whose consequential letter of January 10, 1741, we have already quoted. It is of such far-reaching importance that it must be printed textually :

PARIS
17 Octob. 1740

HON^D SIR,

In my last of 11th Current I touched only by the by what concerns M. Carte's copying his late Matys Original Memoires,

¹ For instance, in 1769 the Curator of the Bodleian Library nominated Thomas Monkhouse to inspect the "Carte Papers" in Jernegan's possession. Monkhouse's report and extract are preserved in the University archives, and proves that he examined volumes containing the Nairne manuscript in 1770.

The Earl of Hardwicke paid Jernegan £200 for the perusal of them for the purpose of his annotations on Burnet's *History of My Own Time*. Sir John Dalrymple, a Jacobite, in his preface to the second edition of his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, published in 1771, wrote :

"Since the first edition of the Memoirs was published, I have, fortunately, fallen upon a collection of papers in London which vouch almost all the new facts that are to be found in them. The papers I mean are those of the late Mr Carte, now in the possession of Mr Jernegan, who married his widow. They consist of very full notes, extracted from the "Memoirs of James II" now in the Scotch Collection at Paris, written by that Prince's own hand, and of many original State papers and copies of others of the Court of St. Germain's."

Although, as Fox surmised and as we shall prove, Dalrymple was misled in thinking that Macpherson's extracts were from the holograph autobiography, instead of being from Dicconson's version of it, it is obvious that he had seen the Nairne Papers of the Carte collection, substantially in the form in which they were subsequently published by Macpherson.

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delaying to give you a more full account to be layd before the King, till M. Carte should have finisht his Copy, which taking more time than I thought it would, I shall put off no longer.

What I had chiefly to say is that judging by the singular privilege of H. Ms allowing M. Carte the use of the Originals, that H. Ms Intention was that his Copy of these Memoires should be in all its perfection. Now the Orig. Memoires having been at first all written upon papers of different Seizes such as his late Maty had about him or at hand during his Campagnes or in the different parts he happened to be ; were in no kind of order till by his late Maties directions, my Brother arranged them and caused bind them up in three vols with references to mark the suite [sequence]. Besides this, they are in some places by length of time and bad ink become almost illegible So that M. Carte was sometimes not a little puzzled to make them out : To remedy this I thought proper to communicate to him a fair Copy we have of these Memoires *ending, as the Orgls do, at the Restoration*¹ in 3 vols in 4°, upon the first Volume of which is the following Notte in my Brothers hand. . . . [Transcribed in 3 volumes in 4° from the Kings Original Memoires by M. Dryden the famous Poet, in the year 1686, and afterwards revised by his Majesty, and in Severall places corrected in his own hand.]

There are besides some other Markes upon this Copy of Mr Dryden by which it would appear that A.D. 1686 when it was made it was making ready for the Press and probably it had been published, if the unhappy Revolution had not soon after fallen out.

This Copy is indeed very valuable it itself being made under his late Majesty's eye, and no doubt all the differences in it from the Original have been made by H. Ms. directions or by himself. Besides severall words or expressions written in H. Ms. own hand, the chief differences between this Copy and the Original consist in this that whereas in the Origl Memoires H M speaks always of himself in the third person e.g. The D. of York was born the 14 Octob. 1633 in this Copy of M. Dryden he is made always to speak in the first persone e.g. I was born 14 Octob. &c and so all over where there is mention of the Battles, Sieges, Marches where he was.

I leave to M. Carte himself to give a particular account of the Copies or Abstracts he is making of these Memoires of the late King and of the use to which he designs them ; *our orders being*

¹ Author's italics.

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*only to communicate to him precisely what his order bears and no more.*¹ And therefore tho we have here besides the Original papers and Letters of the late King Since the Restoration, as they are Sett down in the Severall Inventories Sent to his Majesty by my Brother and by me, none of these have been communicated to M. Carte nor to any other, nor shall they be without an express order in Write from His Maty.

With the Same Caution and Secrecy we keep the late Queen Mother's life written by Fr. Gaill d. *and of the full life at large of the late B. King written by M. Dicconson upon his late Matys Memoires, Letters and Papers both before and Since the Restoration*¹ all which were by Special orders in write of his present Majesty, as well as two Boxes with H Ms papers of which M. Dicconson hath the Kyes ever Since the late Queen Mother's death in whose closet these papers were found and putt up into the two boxes by the late E. of Middleton, M. Dicconson and other Commissaries appointed by H.M. at the time.

I take the liberty to sett down this detail in order to refresh H. Ms memory to find more readily when any thing is required. I beg you will assure H.M. of my most dutifull & most profound respects and believe me ever Hod Sir Your most humble and most obedt Servitor

THO. INESE ²

Here we have the fact established upon unimpeachable and responsible authority that King James's Memoirs ended at the Restoration in 1660. All the rest of the *Life* was compiled by Mr Dicconson some years after King James's death. All controversies about whether Carte, Macpherson, Dalrymple, or Hume saw the Memoirs or the *Life* are wholly irrelevant to the historical drama with which we are concerned.

James's personal testimony "writ of his own hand" ended more than thirty years before the events affecting the conduct of Marlborough and other Revolution leaders. Instead of dealing with the evidence of the exiled King, who had lived in the centre of the affairs he described, we have only the assertions of Mr Dicconson, who had no personal knowledge of what took place, and compiled his history fifteen to twenty years after the crucial period had passed. Macaulay bases

¹ Author's italics.

² Stuart Papers at Windsor, MSS.

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tens of pages of his history upon James's *Life*. He transcribes and translates into his own inimitable story-telling the charges made therein against Marlborough and others. Even so friendly a biographer as Wolseley tamely accepts the *Life* as if it were King James's personal handiwork. In reality friend and foe alike are resting, not on King James's Memoirs written at the time, but only upon the work of Mr Dicconson. Dicconson and the forlorn group of Jacobites and Jesuits among whom he lived had every motive known to the human heart to hate and traduce the English revolutionary leaders ; and of all those leaders none more than Marlborough, who at the time when Dicconson was writing was at the height of his career. Yet everything that Dicconson chose to write has been accepted as if it were the contemporary testimony of King James and as if it were true. On these unsure foundations some of the greatest and most erudite scholars and writers of our language have erected that vast structure of calumny and distortion which has hitherto served as history.

Dicconson had in his possession some time after the year 1704 both the holograph Memoirs of James II which went no further than 1660 and the documents forming the Nairne Papers, and perhaps other documents of which we know nothing. He certainly had the power to record or suppress or alter as he thought fit the whole of the material ; or to put upon it whatever construction he chose, or to invent or add anything he chose. James was dead ; his two Secretaries of State, Melfort and Middleton, were dead ; Nairne was dead ; but the Jacobite clerk remained with a jumble of papers and the priceless but irrelevant holograph of the Memoirs of the King, now lost for ever.

CHAPTER XXII

THE JACOBITE ILLUSION

WE now approach the most unhappy and questionable period in Marlborough's life. The peccadilloes of youth, the work he had to do as confidential servant of the Duke of York, his treasonable letter to the Prince of Orange, his desertion of James at Salisbury, are all capable of either excuse or vindication. Indeed, his conduct towards James was justified not only by his religious and political convictions, but even more by the broad and long interest of England. But it entailed consequences.

"Lord Churchill," says Hume in a severe passage,

had been raised from the rank of a page, had been invested with the High Command in the army, had been created a peer, and had owed his whole fortune to the King's favour; yet even he could resolve during the present extremity to desert his unhappy Majesty, who had ever reposed entire confidence in him. This conduct was a signal sacrifice to public virtue of every duty in private life; and required ever after the most upright, disinterested and public-spirited behaviour to render it justifiable.¹

Yet now we must record that opposition to King William, those intrigues with King James, which seem to stultify his former action, to rob it of its basis of conscientious scruple, and to arm his innumerable assailants with every weapon that indignant rectitude or implacable malice could desire. Moreover, the picture is not one to be painted in bold blacks and whites. We gaze upon a scene of greys shading indefinitely, mysteriously, in and out of one another. A mere recital of facts and outlines would give no true description without a comprehension of the atmosphere. We have to analyse half-tones and discern the subtle planes upon which the subject depends for its interpretation. Finally we have, to some

¹ *History of England*, ii, 485.

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extent, to judge the work by standards different from those which now prevail. Nor shall we try to prove too much. Our task is to repel erroneous or exaggerated criticism, to separate censure from cant, to strip prejudice of its malignancy, and to unmask imposture. And to do this with the recognition that when all is said and done, no complete justification will be found.

In judging the character of Marlborough the question arises whether his actions were dictated by undue self-interest. Reasonable care for a man's own interest is neither a public nor a private vice. It is affectation to pretend that statesmen and soldiers who have gained fame in history have been indifferent to their own advancement, incapable of resenting injuries, or guided in their public action only by altruism. It is when self-interest assumes a slavish or ferocious form, or when it outweighs all other interests in a man's soul, that the censures of history are rightly applied. That Marlborough, like most Englishmen, together with all the Revolution statesmen, should become estranged from the new Government ; that he should quarrel personally with King William ; that he should seek to safeguard himself in the increasingly probable event of a Jacobite restoration, are not in themselves, and under the conditions of the period, wrongful or odious behaviour. The test is whether he was false in intention or in fact to the cause of Protestantism and constitutional freedom, and above all whether the safety of England or the lives of her soldiers and sailors were jeopardized by his actions ; and it is to these aspects that the attention of the reader will be directed.

In those days confidential communications between the chief actors on opposite sides across the frontiers of hostile states and the lines of warring armies were frequent. A polished veneer of courtesy and ceremony prevailed among the nobility, even in the field. Elaborate codes, apparently observed with effective good faith, regulated the exchange of prisoners and of hostages. Passes were issued to privileged individuals to traverse enemy territory. Trumpets came and

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went frequently between the armies on a wide variety of missions. Many of the combatants had been allies in former wars. Many of the opposing leaders were related by blood or marriage. All the royal houses were closely interwoven, and family ties subsisted to some extent in spite of the shifting political antagonisms. The Jacobites in England were numerous and influential. They were a definite, powerful party, in the bosom of which ceaseless conspiracies to bring back the rightful sovereign waxed and waned. Jacobite opinion, as such, was not proscribed by the Government. The cause could be openly avowed. There was a regular political party with its clubs and adherents, ranging from law-abiding gentlefolk at the summit through every grade of disaffection to fanatical physical-force men and downright murderers at the bottom. The Jacobite circles were linked to the ordinary life of every class of the nation by innumerable ties, and nowhere was there a gulf unbridged. It was all a slippery slope.

King James and his family dwelt, refugees, by the throne of Louis XIV. They and their shadow Court, with its handful of Irish troops and Guards, its functionaries and its Ministers, were all dependent for their daily bread upon the bounty or policy of their protector. The vanity of Louis was gratified by the presence in his orbit of a suppliant monarch. He indulged to the full the easy chivalry of affluent pity. Sometimes, indeed, his sentiments for a brother monarch, in whose person not only the Catholic faith but even the Divine Right of Kings had been assaulted, carried him beyond purely French interests. But, in the main, a cool statecraft ruled. The exiled family at Saint-Germains depended for their treatment upon their usefulness in the Continental schemes of France. That usefulness for this purpose was measured by the strength and reality of their English connexions. They had, thus, the strongest inducements—and, indeed, compulsions—to magnify the importance and the intimacy of their British ties and the general vitality of the Jacobite cause. Their supreme object was to obtain from Louis a French fleet to carry them to England, and a French army to re-establish King James upon his throne. They therefore, in

their unhappy plight, continually represented themselves to the French Government as being in the most confidential relations with the leading men in England, especially with the members of King William's Council. They developed every possible contact with English Jacobites and friends, real or pretended, across the Channel. They put their own gloss upon whatever news they could get, and served the result up—more often, perhaps, than was tactful—to the French Ministers. Always they laboured to paint a picture of an England longing for their return and ready to rise the moment a chance presented itself. Let the French supply the army and the ships, and they would make the attempt. Once they landed, all would be well. But the French Ministers were sceptical; they had many independent sources of information, and they had a different point of view.

This process continued for a long period. To and fro across the Channel sped the busy couriers and spies of the Jacobite Party, and within a year of William's landing some sort of contact was re-established between the Revolution leaders—the former courtiers and servants of King James—and the new centre at Saint-Germains. The exiled officials hashed up the reports of their secret agents and the perpetual series of messages, rumours, and whispers, which reached them from across the Channel. Anything that tended to increase the belief of Louis in the reality and ardour of their party in England and Scotland was a godsend. The Earl of Melfort, brother of the Perth whose atrocities in Scotland have left him an evil fame, sat at the receipt of custom. His office was a factory of rosy reports, sustained by titbits of information, all served up to convince King Louis and comfort King James.

As early as 1689 Marlborough was reported to James as being dissatisfied with the new régime and anxious to make his peace with the old. But nothing definite was asserted until the beginning of 1691, about which Dicconson's *Life of James* sets forth at length a series of reports by three Jacobite agents, Mr Bulkeley, Colonel Sackville, and Mr Floyd, or Lloyd, of

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conversations which they declared they had had with Admiral Russell, Godolphin, Halifax, and Churchill.¹ That all these servants of King William allowed or invited Jacobite agents to visit them, and that conversations took place, may well be true. But Dicconson's version of what passed is at once malicious and absurd.² Upon this basis, the authenticity of which we have already examined, Macaulay tells a fine tale.

After describing the successive seductions of Russell and Godolphin he comes to Marlborough.

But all the agents of the banished Court stood aloof from the deserter of Salisbury. That shameful night seemed to have forever separated the false friend from the Prince whom he had ruined. James had, even in the last extremity, when his army was in full retreat, when his whole kingdom had risen against him, declared that he would never pardon Churchill, never, never. By all the Jacobites the name of Churchill was held in peculiar abhorrence; and, in the prose and verse which came forth daily from their secret presses, a precedence in infamy, among all the many traitors of the age, was assigned to him.

But the guilty villain was not so easily to be excluded from future favours.

He therefore sent to beg an interview with Colonel Edward Sackville. Sackville was astonished and not much pleased by the message. . . . It was not without reluctance that the stanch royalist crossed the hated threshold of the deserter. He was repaid for his effort by the edifying spectacle of such an agony of repentance as he had never before seen. "Will you," said Marlborough, "be my intercessor with the King? Will you tell him what I suffer? My crimes now appear to me in their true light; and I shrink with horror from the contemplation. The thought of them is with me day and night. I sit down to table: but I cannot eat. I throw myself on my bed: but I cannot sleep."

Apparently, however, up till January 1690 he had still

¹ In the Jacobite correspondence English notables are always referred to only by the titles which they bore under King James, as William's creations were not recognized.

² It may be read in Clarke's (Dicconson's) *Life of James II*, which Macaulay states (ii, 55) is "The chief authority for this part of my history, . . . particularly the highly important and interesting passage which begins at page 444 and ends at page 450 of the second volume."

been able to drink ; for the French archives record on similar authority that he, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, and two or three others had been present at a drinking-party with King William at which they drank the health of the monarchy, the Anglican Church, the reduction of Ireland, and the invasion of France. "A la fin ils se soulèrent de telle manière qu'ils n'y en eut pas un qui ne perdît toute connoissance."¹ ("In the end they got so drunk that there was not one that did not lose all consciousness.")

Macaulay makes Marlborough continue, "I am ready to sacrifice everything, to brave everything, to bring utter ruin on my fortunes, if only I may be free from the misery of a wounded spirit."

Hitherto Macaulay is more highly coloured than Dicconson. But Dicconson has qualities of his own. We may note the ecclesiastical flavour.

Churchill was in appearance the greatest penitent imaginable. He begged of him [Sackville] to go to the King and acquaint him with his sincere repentance and to intercede for mercy, that he was ready to redeem his apostasy with the hazard of his utter ruine, his crimes apeareing so horrid to him that he could neither sleep, nor eat but in continual anguish, and a great deal to that purpose.

It is an unconscious contest in imaginative embroidery. "Colonel Sackville," says Dicconson,

. . . resolved at the same time to search him [Marlborough] to the Quick and try whether by informeing them readily of what he knew, they might depend upon his sincerity as to what he pretended [promised]. . . . My Lord . . . without the least hesitation gave them both an account of all the forces, preparations and designs both in England, Scotland and Ireland, whither the Prince of Orange intended to go himself, if the French pressed not too hard upon the Confederates in Flanders, and that he hoped to reduce Ireland so soon as to be able to bring part of that Army into the Low Countrys that very Campaign ; he gave likewise an account of the Fleet and in fine of whatever was intended either by Sea or land, *which concurring with the informations*

¹ *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 172, f. 13.

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*they had from other hands*¹ was a great argument of his sincerity; . . . he desired instructions which way he might be serviceable, without being admitted into the King's secrets, owning that the vilanies he had committed, did but too justly debar him from expecting any such confidence; . . . he proffer'd to bring over the English troops that were in Flanders if the King required it, but rather proposed he should act in concert with many more who were intent upon the same thing, that is, to endeavour next Sessions to get all the foreigners sent out of the Kingdom which would bring home more English troops and those he hoped he could influence to better purpose; . . . he advised him [James] when he came, not to bring too numerous an Army, a French power, he said, was terrifying to the people; nevertheless a competent force was necessary; . . . it would neither be fair in him to propose, nor prudent in His Majesty to trust, to those alone who had used him so treacherously already, . . . and upon the whole, he appeared the most Sollicitous imaginable for the King's interest, and the most penitent man upon earth for his own fault, say'd a thousand things to express the horror he *had of his vilanies to ye best of Kings, and yt it would be impossible for him to be at rest*² till he had in some measure made an attonement, by endeavouring (tho with the utmost peril of his life) to restore his injured Prince and beloved Master. ". . . He would give up his life with pleasure if he could thereby recall the fault he had committed . . . that he was so entirely returned to his duty, and love to His Majesty's person that he would be ready with joy upon the least command to abandon Wife, Children and country to regain and preserve his esteem. . . ."

Even Macaulay loses faith in these absurdities; for, after having exploited them as offensively as possible, he snaps at the hands of Dicconson, from which he has hitherto fed with such relish. With a parting insult, he tells us:

The truth was that when Marlborough told the Jacobites that his sense of guilt prevented him from swallowing his food by day and taking his rest at night he was laughing at them. The loss of half a guinea would have done more to spoil his appetite and to disturb his slumbers than all the terrors of an evil conscience.

¹ The italics are ours.

² This passage in Dicconson is said to be underlined by the Old Pretender, though the value of his evidence must be discounted by the fact that he was at the time of these events but four years old.

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No one knows, of course, what Marlborough said or did not say. Dicconson—the sole authority—can only tell us what he thought fit to record of the Jacobite agents' reports of fifteen years before. All this is one-sided assertion. Marlborough never volunteered explanations or justification. He appeared unconscious that there was anything to explain.

To what extent he deceived the Jacobite agents with the fair words and pious assurances; to what extent they boasted the value of the fish they thought they had caught; to what extent Melfort and Nairne exaggerated the secret service information, the collection of which was their main duty, are mysteries; but in this case, as also with Godolphin, Russell, Shrewsbury, and others, we certainly have at one end of the chain an important personage anxious not to be too much hated or too much overlooked at Saint-Germain's, and at the other an unhappy exile in no position to be vindictive or particular in receiving friendly overtures.

Marlborough's communications with the Jacobite Court, or with his sister's son, the Duke of Berwick, or with James's son, the Old Pretender, were no passing intrigue. They were a system. They were a lifelong policy—just so much and no more—pursued continually for a quarter of a century. Under King William there was no written correspondence. There are accounts of messages and conversations, of promises and assurances without number, many of which may be fabrications, but others which could not have been wholly invented and bear in part the stamp of truth.

In the first phase Marlborough's object, like that of the other Revolution leaders, was to obtain a formal pardon from the Exile, in the unpleasant but by no means improbable event of his restoration. This was a phase in the communications of which William was generally aware, which even had his acquiescence. The following extract from Aliesbury's *Memoirs* is significant.

It is very certain that the King [William] gave leave to the Earl of Marlborough, my lord Godolphin, the Duke of Shrewsbury and Admiral Russell to correspond with my lord Middleton at St Germain's. They infused into the King the great advantage

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that might arise to him by it, and on my conscience I believe it. The plausible pretext was that my lord Middleton should be deluded, that he should know nothing of what passed in England of high secret moment, but that they four would wire-draw all out of my Lord Middleton; and no doubt our famous Minister [Sunderland] was at the head of this—but was never named. . . . The four lords set a value on themselves as by that means all secrets at St Germain's would come to their knowledge, so my lord Middleton set a value on himself that by this correspondence he should know what was doing at London, and that unfortunate Prince, King James, gave in to it, notwithstanding all former representations made to him in order to open his eyes.¹

This probably goes beyond the truth; but at the least William viewed all these intrigues with Saint-Germain's with a tolerant eye. "With respect to the riots in Northamptonshire," he wrote on July 15, 1694,

I recollect that not long ago I was informed that Lord Monmouth² had made his peace at St Germain's. Not knowing what to believe, you must try to discover, if possible, whether he, who is lord lieutenant of the county, has fomented or interfered in those riots; and you will please to give me your opinion, whether that employment should not be given to another person.

Here we see the King, the person most affected and best informed, drawing a clear distinction between "making peace with St Germain's" and overt unlawful action. Shrewsbury in reply wrote (July 17, 1694):

I can give no answer to what your majesty is pleased to inquire concerning my lord Monmouth's making his peace at St Germain's. It is natural for a man that is very ill on one side, to desire not to be so on the other; but I dare say, let him have made what advances are possible of that kind, if he could find his account under your majesty's government, it is what he would prefer much before any such alteration; and at this time he appears in so much a better temper to act any thing for your majesty's service than you can believe, that I should not think it at all

¹ Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, ii, 391.

² Afterwards Earl of Peterborough.

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advisable to turn him out of his lieutenancy ; and for his having any thing to do in that disturbance at Northampton, I dare engage he knew no more than an accidental tumult of the rabble, occasioned by their seeing corn sold in quantities out of the town, and is now quiet, without any other interposition, but that of the magistrates alone.¹

This interchange of letters probably gives us a truer guide to the actual significance of intrigues with Saint-Germains than any of the diatribes of the historians. The mere "making peace with St Germain's," even by one of his Lord-Lieutenants, was not regarded either by the King or the high circles around him upon the footing of treason ; and since almost every prominent leader had safeguarded himself in this way it did not seem to them to be a dishonourable action. It is not our purpose to defend such conduct, but only to reduce it to its proper place in the perilous, tragical politics of those days.

Under Anne we enter a region of purely military camouflage, as in 1702, when Marlborough, actively frustrating the French in the field and seeking eagerly to fight a decisive battle, received Jacobite envoys in his camp, sending them away with who shall say what cryptic or encouraging words ; or as in 1708, when he is besieging Lille in circumstances of extraordinary military difficulty, and keeps up at the same time a lengthy and active correspondence with the Duke of Berwick, possibly with the knowledge of the Pensionary Heinsius, about peace negotiations. We shall return to this later.

But the most remarkable illustration of this second phase is found among the Nairne Papers in the Bodleian. It is a letter written, evidently to Middleton, from London by the Jacobite agent Hooke in April 1704. Marlborough was about to set out for Holland, and the secret of his intended march to the Danube lay locked in his mind. He allowed Hooke to come to see him, and a most agreeable conversation ensued.

Some days before leaving for Holland, Lord Churchill had me sought out, and made me so many promises, and gave me such

¹ Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 52-54.

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proof of the rightness of his intention to wish to pay the debt which he had recognized so long was due to your family, that I could have no doubt of his sincerity. He seemed astonished that the Duke of Berwick had been sent to Spain and engaged so far afield, and he asked me how you could have consented to such a thing. I told him that you had already written to me on the subject and that the Duke's employment in so considerable a post would be certainly highly advantageous for our common interests. I perceived, however, that he thought that the Duke would have been more useful in the theatre where he was last year. He directed me besides in his absence to go and see Lord Godolphin and let him know anything which I should receive of importance to you and to your family.

Mr Floyd is most zealous in your family interest. He also a little while ago saw Lord Churchill and has begged me to inform you that this nobleman has given him every promise and assurance which he could have hoped for of his intention to pay his debt. Thus I am daily more convinced of the probability that our affairs will turn out well; and the misunderstandings which exist here between the Party leaders will contribute not a little in my opinion to justify good hopes.¹

The reader should notice that in this interview it is Hooke who, according to his own naïve account, gives or confirms the valuable information that Berwick is to command in Spain, while Marlborough tells him nothing in return. But Hooke was quite content to be able to report to Saint-Germains that he had been kindly received by the great man, and had been told to visit Godolphin in his absence from time to time, and bring him any news of interest from Saint-Germains.

It is characteristic of Macpherson that, while he printed all the other Nairne Papers relating to Marlborough, he omitted this one. Yet this paper more than any other reveals what we believe to have been the only method of communication with Saint-Germains practised by Marlborough and the English Ministers: namely, interviews subsequently written

¹ Carte MSS., 209, f. 430 (translated from the French), a letter from London, written by Hooke and dated April 22, 1704, in the copy in the French archives. This, the original in the Nairne Papers, has no date.

out from memory by the Jacobite agents. This would explain the absence of any holograph letters in King James's archives. It explains much else besides.

There is, lastly, in the long story of Marlborough's relations with Saint-Germains a phase, possibly the least insincere of all, when he endeavoured to establish some kind of amicable relationship with the Old Pretender, "James III." And there are always great civilities and protestations of devotion to the exiled Queen. All baffling; all mystifying; truth and falsehood, pity and deception, intermingled; dual loyalties deliberately exploited. Was it not important for Saint-Germains to be able to tell Louis XIV that they were in close, secret, constant relationship with the Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's army? They would be grateful for that. It was a real service. It cost nothing. It did not hamper business. It all tended to create uncertainty. The French Government, keenly interested in Berwick's peace negotiations, might have their mind diverted from the defence of Lille and its citadel. This was all part of Marlborough's war-making; and also part of his system. And so, a month or perhaps a week later—a swift march, a sudden assault, thrusting out of a cloud of honeyed words and equivocation, changed fortunes in the field. Webs of intrigue, crossings, double-crossings, stratagems, contrivances, deceit; with smiles, compliments, nods, bows, and whispers—then *crash!* sudden reversion to a violent and decisive military event. The cannon intervene.

There is no disputing the validity of the Jacobite complaint, that they never got anything out of Marlborough except promises which were not made good, and information which arrived only when it was stale. Yet there was no moment at which they could say, "He is only fooling us. He is only feeding us with trifles and smooth words." For there never was a moment when they could not nurse the hope that, if the Exile returned, the Captain-General would put him on the throne; or when they could dismiss the fear that in the teeth of his resistance all hope of return was ended. In the upshot they were disappointed. As things turned out,

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they got less than nothing at all. They were mocked with false hopes; placated with counterfeit coin; smothered with empty salutations. They were as much confused, perplexed, and kept continually uncertain as Tallard on the eve of Blenheim, or Villeroy on the morning of Ramillies, or as Villars before his lines were forced. A vast system of genuine shams, a prolonged relationship of deceits that were effective because they never excluded the possibility of being real: the whole of this prevailing over twenty-five years and expressed in terms of perfervid loyalty, with promises made, as they declare, of the highest service and of the darkest treachery. But nothing to show for it! Not a corporal's guard turned over! Not a picket conceded in the field; not a scrap of information that they did not know, or that was not public property already; but always hope and always delay, always disappointment—and then more hope. Marlborough betrayed nothing, but to the end no Jacobite agent, courtier, or Minister could ever feel sure he would not some day betray *everything* into their hands. Nor can we at this stage pursue the hypothesis of what he would have done if this or that had happened. If, for instance, upon the demise of Anne, James III had landed after declaring himself Protestant and being acclaimed by England, as William III had been after Torbay, would Marlborough have felt bound to die for the house of Hanover? The Jacobites could not tell at the time, and we certainly cannot to-day.

We must confine ourselves to what actually happened. Every account, every record, summed up, shows that the Jacobite Court were for a quarter of a century flattered, duped, baffled, and in the event ruined by an inscrutable and profound personality. They certainly had every reason to blacken the memory of the calm, deep, patient man who threaded his way almost unerringly through the labyrinth of dynastic, political, and military intrigues in five reigns, and who emerged at every decisive moment the successful champion of British interests, of Protestant interests, and of his own interests.

Let us, however, see what the final conclusions of the

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Court of Saint-Germains were. Here are some extracts from Dicconson.

It is hard, considering what had happened, to make a right judgment of their [King William's Ministers and Marlborough] intentions and whether they had any other aim in what they did than to secure themselves against a just resentment of an offended prince should he fortune to return by other means. . . .

Lord Dartmouth's proffer of service which he sent by Mr Lloyd, though it was probably more sincere, proved of as little use as the rest. . . .

For the Prince of Orange looking never the worse upon Lord Godolphin and Admiral Russell (an argument he had been no stranger to their practices) but it was a check on others who perhaps meant *better* ; of which number whether my Lord Churchill was to be counted on or no is still a mystery and the veil is like to remain upon it.

Again :

Nevertheless the King found no effects of these mighty promisses, for his Majesty insisting upon his [Churchill's] offer of bringing over the English troops in Flanders, as the greatest service he could doe him, he excused himself under pretence there was some mistake in the message, that it would ruin all to make the troops come over by parcells, that his business was to gain an absolute power over them, then to doe all the business at once. . . .

Again :

My Lord Churchill himself in his letter the 13 of december¹ . . . tells the King, that he must not depend upon any other advantage by his Declaration, than to dispose the people to receive him when he came with a sutable force, and therefore begs of his Majesty not to venter with less than Five and Twenty thousand men, besides arms &c. for Seven thousand more. These were the putts off the King met with from these pretended friends, who never did him any essential good or themselves any harme, for if they were out of imployment, it passed for aversion to the government, and they made a merit of it; and if they found means of being readmitted, then it was

¹ Non-existent.

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represented as a mighty advantage to the King, their being in a better capacity of serving him. . . .

Again:

Accordingly the next letter¹ which My Lord Churchill writ, he tells the King that My Lord [Shrewsbury] was so press'd to accept of his former imployment of Secretary of State, that he fear'd he could not resist, but that tho' he alter'd his condition he assured him he would never alter his inclinations; whereas in reality one of my Lord [Shrewsbury]'s principal advisers to this, was My Lord Churchill himself, that he might do him the like good turn, and procure his readmission into favour too. . . .

We are also told how Admiral Russell and other naval officers tricked the King. If the British fleet missed the French fleet, they declared it was their loyalty to James. If they met it and beat it, they stood well with William. This picture is in the main true.

And again of Churchill:

. . . however he continued his correspondence with the King, if not by letters at least by messages as long as his Majesty lived, but the Prince of Orange dying soon after, a new scene was open'd to him, in which he amazed the world with his conduct, and fortune; however, he still pretended a good will to make some reparation to the Son, for the former infidelities to the Father.²

We do not wish to press our advantage too far. We seek truth, not triumph. We affirm independently that the Revolution leaders all had the relations we have described and shall describe with the Court of Saint-Germain, and none so prolonged as those of Marlborough. But at this stage we challenge, as based on no evidence worth the name, all the details and descriptions of conversations reported through several hands, all abject or foolish expressions, and all shameful proposals or betrayals in so far as they rest upon Dicconson's so-called *Life* or the Memoirs of James II, "writ of his own hand."

The long succession of historians who follow each other

¹ Non-existent.

² Clarke, *Life of James II*, pp. 444 *seq.*

like sheep through the gates of error are all agreed about Marlborough's profound sagacity and that self-interest was his motive power. Let us, then, try the case by these standards. What conceivable interest could he have had in bringing back James? At the best a contemptuous pardon and a justly ineradicable distrust. Of all the notables of England he had the least to hope and the most to fear from such a restoration. How eagerly would triumphant Jacobites, proud Tories, and infuriated Whigs have combined in such an event to drive into obscurity the double-dyed arch-traitor who had presumed to be the maker and un-maker of kings! What succour from his old master could he look for against such a storm? Exile, disgrace, or at best some pittance, some sinecure, was the most that magnanimity or indifference could bestow; and James was not the most magnanimous or forgiving of men. What chance had Marlborough but the Princess Anne? There, in the narrow circle of the Cockpit, where long friendship and companionship reigned, where the bonds of union were only forged more tensely by external persecution or danger, lay the only hope. And that a great one! Why should he bring back James and his lusty son, in his own right or under a regency—under a jealous Council of State as a Catholic, or still more as a Protestant—and exclude for ever Anne from the succession? Why should he “abandon wife, children and country” for that? Never for one moment could he have entertained such inanities. We can hear him make his customary comment, “Silly! Silly!” The more sagacious, the more self-seeking he, the less harbourage such devastating contingencies could have found. From the closing years of Charles II, through the unceasing convulsions and confusions of this time, John and Sarah held on to Anne and staked their public existence upon her fortunes and her favour.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE FAMILY QUARREL

(1691-1692)

AT the end of October 1691 William landed at Margate from the wars, and all the way to London he was warmly welcomed by the people. They did not realize the failure of the Continental campaign, and the good news from Ireland roused their enthusiasm. Ginkel had defeated the Irish with an immense slaughter at Aughrim. Limerick had surrendered. The Irish hero Sarsfield had made terms which allowed him to carry eighteen thousand of the best Irish troops out of the country into the French service. It seemed that the Irish troubles were at an end; at least, all resistance was crushed. But the national rejoicing at the local victory was inspired by the hope of an early general peace. Of this there was no prospect. The most costly years of the first part of the world war still lay ahead.

The King brought with him in his coach Bentinck and Marlborough; apparently all were on cordial terms. At Shooter's Hill the coach overturned. Bentinck and Marlborough were hurt. Marlborough, indeed, seems to have been dazed, for he declared that his neck was broken. William, who was only shaken, reassured him that this could not be so, "since he could still speak." The party, somewhat battered, were able to make their entry into London amid cheering crowds.¹

Nevertheless the realities of the situation might well cause the King anxiety. The injustice done to English officers and the implied insult to the Army aroused strong feelings throughout English society. These vexations were shared by the English Ministers, through whom and with whom William was forced to govern, and especially by that central

¹ *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1690-91, 547; *Portland Papers, H.M.C.*, iii, 477.

group to which he naturally inclined. They saw that the sovereign who had invited them to serve him secured himself against his new subjects by foreign troops and foreign commanders of English troops. They saw themselves threatened in their own position. Both Houses of Parliament, the rank and fashion of London, the officers and the troops themselves, all felt that their country was not being treated fairly or honourably by the Dutch Prince whose aid they had invoked. As long as the Irish war continued, or whenever a French invasion threatened, these natural sentiments were perforce repressed; but at all other times they broke forth with pent-up anger. Although Parliament steadily voted heavy supplies for war against France by sea and land, the use of British troops on the Continent became unpopular; and the pressure upon the King to dismiss his Dutch guards and Dutch favourites was unceasing. Indeed, at the end of 1691 the position of William and his Dutch clique seemed superficially as precarious as had been that of James and his Catholic camarilla three years before.

Marlborough, already offended by what he regarded as ill-usage, convinced that it was William's policy to keep him in the shade, and more excusably vexed by the futile conduct of the campaign in Flanders, did not hesitate to show his hostility. To all this movement which flared up in Parliament and the higher circles of London that winter he lent an influence which was soon found to be potent. He criticized the King openly. He welcomed the tale-bearing which carried his caustic comments to the royal ear. He said at Lord Wharton's before a company that in the previous reign James had been so eager to fill the army with Irishmen that the only question asked was, "Do you speak English?" Now all that had happened was that the word "Dutchman" was changed for "Irishman." He spoke of Bentinck as "a wooden fellow." He remonstrated with William to his face upon his gifts of Crown property to Bentinck and Zulestein. "With great grief of heart many of his faithful servants," he said,

among whom he requested the honour to be included, saw the royal munificence confined to one or two lords and these

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foreigners. . . . As far as he was concerned he had no cause to complain; he was amply provided for in the post he held under his Majesty; but in duty bound he felt obliged to lay before him what he ought to know, because he could not otherwise be apprized of means to remedy the disasters that might be the result of such unpopular conduct.¹

Perhaps he did not express himself so elegantly; but this was the gist of it. He may, indeed, have said more. The King indignantly turned his back upon him.

William was accustomed, as the records show, to tolerate very plain speaking from the English notables. They wrote him long lectures on his political mistakes. The Whigs clamoured incessantly for all the offices because they had never abandoned their principles, and the Tories because they had abandoned them all and much regretted it. William's relations with Marlborough, though strained, were not broken by mere words. When the commands for the next year's campaign were being decided, he designed to take him to Flanders as Lieutenant-General attached to his own person. Marlborough demurred to this undefined position. He did not wish to be carried round Flanders as a mere adviser, offering counsel that was not taken, and bearing responsibility for the failures that ensued. He craved leave to remain at home, unless he was required at least to command the British troops, as in the past year. But the King had offered them to Ginkel, and afterwards bestowed them, with lamentable results, upon Count Solms.

Meanwhile Marlborough began indirectly to stir the House of Commons for an address to the Crown on the subject of the Employment of Foreigners, and he proposed himself to move a similar motion in the House of Lords. Widespread support was forthcoming. It even appeared likely that the motion would be carried by majorities in both Houses. The King saw himself about to be requested to dismiss his Dutch followers and favourites from all English offices, and to send back to Holland the five thousand Dutch guards upon whom he relied as his ultimate security. This was unmistakably a

¹ *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*, p. 31.

hostile proceeding. It was perfectly lawful; it might be thought even healthy; and nowadays, when happily the sovereign reigns but does not govern, would be fought out as an ordinary matter of domestic controversy. But at the end of the seventeenth century all opposition wore the guise of faction, and was readily regarded by the Crown as disloyalty or even treason. Moreover, Marlborough's activities did not end with Parliament. He was the leading British general. "His courage, his abilities, his noble and winning manner, the splendid success which had attended him on every occasion on which he had been in command, had made him," says Macaulay, "in spite of his sordid vices, a favourite with his brethren in arms." Undoubtedly many officers of various ranks resorted to him and loudly expressed their resentment at the favour shown to the Dutch. The "sordid vices" showed themselves, we are told, in the fact that he never entertained them with meat or drink.¹ His influence was exerted on their minds, and not, as was expected in those days, upon their stomachs. In spite of this characteristic omission, he had a great public and personal following in both Parliament and the Army at the beginning of 1692.

The general unrest among the high personnel of the Court and Government could not remain secret from the King. He certainly became aware that during 1691 most of those who surrounded him, to whom he owed much and without whom he could not govern England, were in some sort of communication with the rival he had ousted, and who sought in turn to dethrone him. But he had a far better comprehension of the forces at work than any of his posthumous literary champions. He knew that he was driving England very hard, and forcing upon its Parliamentary system and society treatment to which his own Dutch oligarchy would never have submitted. He could imagine the attitude of "Their High Mightinesses" if purely Dutch offices, Dutch estates, and Dutch commands had been lavished upon Englishmen. He did not therefore resent as strongly as his later admirers have done the double-dealing

¹ "Il ne donnoit jamais à manger (ce qui n'étoit pas le moyen de gagner les officiers Anglais)." (News-letter in Denbigh Papers, *H.M.C.*, vii, 220.)

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by which he was encompassed. He accepted it as a necessary element in a situation of unexampled perplexity. He tolerated perforce the fact that all his principal English counsellors were reinsuring themselves against a break-up of his government or his death on the battlefield. He continued to employ all these men in great offices of State and confidence about his person. He calculated with shrewd wisdom that, though they might turn against him as they had turned against James, yet they would not compromise the two main issues which had made them all his reluctant bedfellows; and he saw almost insuperable difficulties in their being able to dissociate the cause of James from the causes of Popery and France.

He did not, therefore, unduly trouble himself when Godolphin told him of the presents and tokens of affection which he was sending to Mary of Modena. He listened coolly when his Ministers described to him questions put to them by Jacobite agents and the answers they had given. It is a well-known practice of counter-espionage to give not only false or stale information to an enemy agent, but within certain limits true information to gain his confidence, with the intent thereafter to mislead the more. Many of the spying go-betweens of war or politics, then as now, imparted secrets, besides searching for them. William knew, or at least suspected, that Shrewsbury was in touch with Saint-Germains through his notorious mother; yet, as we shall see, again and again he implored Shrewsbury to take or retain the highest offices. He knew that Russell had made his peace with James; yet he kept him in command of the fleet, and was to find his confidence vindicated at the battle of Cape La Hogue. He knew that Marlborough preserved the family contacts with his nephew the Duke of Berwick, and that his wife corresponded with her sister, the Duchess of Tyrconnel. He probably knew that Marlborough had obtained his pardon from James by persuading the Princess Anne to send a dutiful message to her father. None the less he thought that the magnet of the Protestant cause and resistance to France would hold these men and others in the essentials to their duty, and that in the end it would be James, and not himself,

who would be deceived. He proved right ; and it may well be that his wise tolerance and prudent blind eye were the perfection of his statecraft. Meanwhile he relied on his Dutch Guards, and saw to it that no Englishman gained the control of the Army. After all, he was getting a lot out of England for his Continental schemes, of which these ignorant islanders, as he deemed them, only dimly saw the importance.

Up to this point, according to their own accounts, the Jacobites had been extremely well pleased to see all this discontent gathering against the Government. It was already whispered in their secret circles that Marlborough also had made his peace with James. They nursed the hope that this powerful man was working for a restoration. The Houses of Parliament would make demands upon the King which he could not accept, and the Army under Marlborough would see that no violence was done to the Houses of Parliament. They looked forward to a crisis as the result of which, without the accursed aid of French bayonets, the rightful King might be restored by British votes and British arms, and remount his throne under the sword and shield of "the deserter of Salisbury." We have already shown the absurdity of this illusion. It did not dawn upon the Jacobites until the New Year. Then they suddenly remembered the Princess Anne and the small, devoted group at the Cockpit. So, then, all this movement and focus of discontent from which they had expected so much, to which they had contributed what weight their party had, was not to be for their benefit ! On the contrary, if it succeeded it would exclude James for ever from the throne and would ensure the Protestant succession under Anne, with Marlborough, whose stature and force were already beginning to be understood, as her Captain-General. Their fury knew no bounds. Without consulting King James, who was dreaming that his former skilful servant of so many years would regain him his crown, they went to Bentinck with tales of vast and imminent conspiracy.

There is no evidence worthy of the name that Marlborough

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ever plotted the substitution of Anne for William and Mary. The obstacles were enormous. The risks, if not beyond his daring, were condemned by his practical good sense. It is probable that he had in view nothing more than the placing of the Princess Anne at the head of a combination of all parties, and the consequent assertion of his own power in the State for its great advantage. But though nothing so definite as a *coup d'état* had emerged in Marlborough's mind, he certainly sought to assemble and combine all forces hostile to the Government of the day, which in those days was indistinguishable from the King himself. It was for this reason above all others that he wished at this time to stand well with the Jacobites, and carry them with him as far as they would go. Like other Leaders of Opposition in later days, he would not willingly discard any factor that would add weight to his movement. Thus he no doubt allowed the eager Jacobite agents to lead James to believe that he was working in his interests. For the rest he certainly marched forward along roads which led into country where constitutional battles might have to be fought, which at every stage would have opened a wider prospect and raised graver issues. From these hazards, if the events had progressively favoured his advance, he would by no means have shrunk. He was a most audacious man, and not one to assign limits to success. When there has been one revolution there may well be another. He thought and felt about politics as he did about war, in terms of combinations, and of forces moving up to this point or that, and then a trial of strength and skill, and a new view of the situation thereafter.

When William heard from Bentinck what the Jacobites had disclosed, he was seriously alarmed and angered, but not for the reason which is usually assigned. He may have noticed for himself that Shrewsbury, Russell, and Godolphin had begun to be less attentive to the Queen than to the Princess Anne. The Cockpit had become a meeting-place for many important personages. William had good information of much that passed there; for Lady Fitzharding, Anne's second lady-in-waiting, was in the closest touch with Elizabeth

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Villiers, his reputed mistress and intimate friend. He therefore had some confirmation from another angle of the lurid exaggerations of the Jacobites.

A movement in favour of the Princess Anne seemed to William far more dangerous than any that concerned James. He saw the blunt facts to which so many eminent writers have been purblind. He was never afraid of Marlborough trying to bring back James. He understood only too well where Marlborough's interests lay. He was content that James should be fooled. Of all his perils the Jacobite invasion, the most paraded in the history books, gave him the least anxiety. Quite a different mood stole over him when he saw or imagined Parliament, the Army, and the Princess Anne—a fatal trident—in the hand of Marlborough, pointed at his heart. Macaulay says, “William was not prone to fear, but if there was anyone on earth that he feared, it was Marlborough.” He had discerned at first sight the qualities, military and political, of this ambitious, aggrieved, outspoken, calculating, bland, and redoubtable personality. He was conscious of the fire that burned within that bold heart. He knew that his own policy obliged him to deny his great subject fair scope for his genius. He expected reprisals. There is a double-edged significance in the remark which the King made in the presence of a group of nobles at Court, that “he had been treated so infamously by Marlborough that had he not been a king, he would have felt it necessary to demand personal satisfaction.”¹ There are mutual injuries which efface differences of rank and station, and arouse in generous spirits the desire for an equal combat. We are to find a happier sequel for William's cause and Marlborough's fame.

These griefs on both sides—in all conscience serious enough—between the men were now to receive feminine aggravation. King William was profoundly disturbed at the suggestions of intrigue, or even plot, to transfer the crown to Princess Anne. But his indignation was surpassed by that of

¹ Reported by Bonnet, the Brandenburg envoy, and quoted by Ranke, *History of England*, vi, 177. Cf. Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 489.

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the Queen. That her own sister should be made the instrument to thrust her from the throne and usurp it herself was indeed intolerable, and what step was more urgent than to preserve that sister from the influence—nay, possession—that dominated her and made her the battering-ram of such fell designs? Upon Sarah, therefore, fell the anger of the Queen.

The feeling about the royal grants had rankled for three years. In its sequel William had treated Marlborough ill, and Marlborough had felt resentment against William. The King, new-made and but lately an armed usurper, was the fountain not only of honours, which are minor, but of opportunity. He had measureless means of repaying what he considered family insubordination. The Princess Anne loved her husband dearly. They lived the closest married life together. She believed that he was a warrior capable of leading fleets and armies. He was in fact a good, brave, soldierly simpleton. His heart was with the Protestant princes in their war against "the overweening power of France." He sought to serve, if he could not command. He went uninvited with the King to Ireland in 1690. William treated him with unwarrantable contempt. He excluded him from his coach, to which his rank as husband to Anne, the heiress-presumptive to the throne, entitled him. Although the round-shot which grazed and wounded the King during the reconnaissance on the eve of the Boyne had passed almost as near to his brother-in-law, William left him ignored to trundle along with the armies.¹ In 1691 the poor Prince, not wishing to expose himself to more of such treatment, volunteered for service at sea without command. In those days soldiers and civilian landsmen went afloat without hesitation, and were

¹ "The King never took more notice of him than if he had been a page of the Backstairs nor he was never once named in any Gazette, tho I am apt to think the bullet that so kindly kissed the King's shoulder was as near to his Royal Highness." ("An Account of King William and Queen Mary's Undeserv'd Ill Treatment of her Sister, the Princess of Denmark," by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.) This manuscript, of which copies exist at Blenheim and Althorp, is an account written by Sarah for the benefit of Mrs Burnet, who "had such a violent Passion for Queen Mary." It can be dated *circa* 1702-4. As it is a slightly amplified version of the account of William III's reign given in the *Conduct*, it proves that for this period the *Conduct* is almost a contemporary document.

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even entrusted with important duties—sometimes without misadventure. Prince George made his request to the King on the latter's departure for Flanders. William embraced him, but said nothing. "Silence in such cases," says Sarah,

being generally taken for consent, the Prince prepared his equipage and sent everything on board. But the King, it afterwards appeared, had left orders with the Queen that she should neither suffer the Prince to go to sea nor yet forbid him to go, if she could so contrive matters as to make his staying at home his own choice.¹

Sarah was again invited to implement this delicate policy. Of course she refused point-blank. It was certainly asking too much of the Prince who had charged so bravely and rescued his brother in the battle with the Swedes to withdraw from the naval campaign without any explanation but his own change of mind. A direct order must be given. It was given.

By these petty incivilities playing upon the strongest sentiments of important personages King William added needlessly to his many difficulties. Anne was a very real person. She was by no means the catspaw she has so often been depicted. She moved on broad, homely lines. She was devoted to her religion, to her husband, and to friends whose fidelity she had proved. It cannot be doubted at all that she would have faced poverty, exile, imprisonment, or even death with placid, unconquerable resolution for the sake of any of them. Once she got set, it took years to alter her. She was not very wise nor clever, but she was very like England. Now she was, as she conceived it, assailed by her sister and by her sister's husband, whose title to the throne she had willingly completed. She saw clearly what the Marlboroughs had risked and sacrificed for her. Her heart flowed out in love for Sarah and in admiration for John. All those slow, simple qualities which afterwards made her reign as glorious in the history of the British Empire as those of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria now displayed themselves.

¹ *Conduct*, p. 39.

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Therefore when, early in January 1692, the Queen, hot upon the news of the alleged conspiracy and the wicked intrigues of Lord Marlborough in Parliament and the Army—nay, and with Saint-Germains too, if the truth were known—summoned Anne to her presence and ordered her to dismiss Sarah, she found herself confronted with inexpugnable resistance. The Queen opened upon the enormity of Anne's giving Sarah—that mischief-maker, that breeder of dissension in the royal family, the wife of a dangerous man harassing or betraying the King—an annuity of £1000 a year from her Parliamentary grant. It was the crowning abuse. Was it for this that Parliamentary grants were made? Now we can see why the King should have been trusted to provide what was right for his relations. Sarah must be dismissed forthwith. Anne, who was expecting another baby, met the assault with silent fortitude. From time to time she uttered a few words of phlegmatic negation. In the presence of invincible refusal Mary lost her temper, raised her voice, threatened to deprive her of half her Parliamentary grant—which was certainly not in her power. The talk became an altercation, both sides having a self-convincing case. The courtiers drew back in shocked agitation. The two sisters parted in the anger of what proved to be a mortal estrangement.¹

The next morning at nine o'clock Marlborough, discharging his functions as Gentleman of the Bedchamber, handed the King his shirt, and William preserved his usual impassivity. Two hours later Nottingham delivered to Marlborough a written order to sell at once all the offices he held, civil and military, and consider himself as from that date dismissed from the Army and all public employment, and forbidden the Court. No reasons were given officially for this important stroke. The Court and Parliament were left to speculate whether it had been impelled by the dispute observed between the two Princesses on the night before, or whether it arose out of Marlborough's House of Commons activities, or whether some graver cause lay behind. The topic for

¹ *Conduct*, pp. 83-84.

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some weeks excited all minds, and, as may be imagined, there was no lack of explanations. Surmise was acid but not entirely ill-informed. Count Stratemann, the Minister of the Empire, wrote to Vienna on February 8 :

As Marlborough did not become Quartermaster-General after the taking of Kinsale, he first attempted to stir up the English people against the Government by complaints that all the higher Army commands were only for foreigners, since the command in England and Scotland was in the hands of the Duke of Leinster, Count Schomberg ; that in Ireland under Ginkel, that of the English forces in Flanders under Count Salm [Solms], and according to Churchill the British had nothing to console themselves with. Secondly, in public assemblies he had accused the King of ingratitude, and said that he could neither punish nor reward. Thirdly, Marlborough had tried, by means of his wife, who is chief lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Denmark, to cause discord between the Queen and the Princess. Finally, what is still more important, despite the fact that he had betrayed King James, he had endeavoured to conciliate that monarch again.¹

Another explanation has lived because of a telling story attached to it. The King is said to have made Marlborough privy with only Danby and Shrewsbury to a plan for the attack upon Dunkirk. News of this intention, we are told, had reached the enemy through the Duchess of Tyrconnel, and the project had to be abandoned on account of the French counter-preparations. William, much incensed at this breach of faith, asked the three lords to whom alone he had confided

¹ Translated from the reports to Vienna in the appendix to Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, vi, 375.

Mr Atkinson considers that "the most satisfactory explanation is that which represents the King as telling Nottingham that he had disgraced Marlborough for fomenting discord and disaffection in the Army and for his correspondence with Saint-Germains. He added 'he has rendered such valuable service that I have no wish to press him too hard.' " There is nothing to object to in this. But Mr Atkinson cites Wolseley (ii, 263) as his authority. Wolseley bases himself upon Vol. XI, No. 11, of "Tracts in the Athenæum Library." Students of history will be surprised to learn what this tract is. It is one of the lampoons published against Marlborough in 1711 under the title *Oliver's Pocket Looking Glass*. It is anonymous ; but the style is similar to Mrs Manley's productions already noticed in an earlier chapter, and evidently comes from the same factory of party propaganda. That such a piece of trash issued nineteen years after the event should be described by one friendly historian on the authority of another as "the most satisfactory explanation" illustrates the flimsiness of the foundations upon which the most conscientious writers are content to rely.

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the secret whether they had told anyone of it. Marlborough's answer was, "Upon my honour, Sire, I told it to nobody but my wife." "I did not tell it to mine," was the King's rejoinder. It was commonly supposed, says Wolseley, that Sarah had informed her sister, by whom it was communicated to James and through him to the French Court.

Wolseley cites various authorities for this allegation,¹ his chief being Horace Walpole, gossiping years after Marlborough's death. He offers in confirmation Burnet, who does not mention Dunkirk; Lord Dartmouth, who likewise does not name Dunkirk; and Carleton, who tells the same tale in his *Memoirs*, but in reference to a projected attack the same year upon Brest! Despite this complete absence of trustworthy sources, a long string of writers have adopted the story. If it was true, certainly it was not a case of indiscretion. Sarah knew how to keep secrets. If anything leaked out through her it was intentional and at Marlborough's instigation; altogether an odious act. But be patient.

The design against Dunkirk was not formed till August 1692, nor that against Brest till 1694. Marlborough's exclusion from the Council and the Court was in January 1692. William did not speak to him again till 1695. It is therefore rather difficult to fix a date for the King's pungent rebuke. There was, in fact, no moment when such a conversation could have taken place. The dialogue itself is as old as the hills. It is one of those anecdotes which travel down from generation to generation and, if they seem to fit, are fastened by gossips to the names of prominent people who are under the frown of power.

Marlborough took his dismissal, and the abuse, deserved and undeserved, let loose upon him in the highest circles, with unconcern. He had deliberately courted a breach with the King. He may have been surprised that his influence, connexions, services, and ability had not counted for more: evidently he had overrated their value. But he was not the man to take a course of action without counting the cost:

¹ Wolseley, ii, 265. His reference is to the 1734 edition of Burnet.

there is no record of any complaints, or even comments, uttered by him. His political position was not immediately affected. Parliamentary and public opinion as a whole considered that he had been ill-used, and that he had suffered for standing up for the rights of Englishmen against the Dutch and foreign favourites. His chief associates—the greatest men of the day—were offended. Shrewsbury let his disapproval be known; Godolphin threatened to retire from the Government. Admiral Russell, now Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, went so far as to reproach King William to his face with having shown ingratitude to the man who had “set the crown upon his head.” William, who with some reason only trusted Russell more than Marlborough because he feared him less, preserved an obdurate silence.

Anne’s distress was acute. She was convinced that the husband of her friend and guide had suffered on her account. She did not attend the Court at Kensington for three weeks, and when at length she did so, she went accompanied by Sarah. This was indeed a step of hardihood on the part of both women. The courtiers were aghast. The Queen, not unreasonably, saw herself affronted. She wrote her sister a long and vehement letter of remonstrance, appeal, and command.

. . . Never anybody was suffered to live at Court in my Lord Marlborough’s circumstances. I need not repeat the cause he has given the King to do what he has done, nor his [the King’s] unwillingness at all times to come to such extremities, though people do deserve it. . . .

. . . It is very unfit that Lady Marlborough should stay with you, since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he ought not.

I think I might have expected you should have spoke to me of it. And the King and I both believing it, made us stay [forbear] thus long. But seeing you was so far from it, that you brought Lady Marlborough hither last night, makes us resolve to put it off no longer, but tell you she must not stay, and that I have all the reason imaginable to look upon your bringing her as the strangest thing that ever was done. Nor could all my kindness for you, which is ever ready to turn all you do the best way at any



PRINCESS ANNE AND THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER
After Michael Dahl
National Portrait Gallery

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other time, have hindered my showing you so that moment, but I considered your condition, and that made me master myself so far as not to take notice of it then.

But now I must tell you it was very unkind in a sister, would have been very uncivil in an equal, and I need not say I have more to claim. Which though my kindness would make me never exact, yet when I see the use you would make of it, I must tell you I know what is due to me, and expect to have it from you. 'Tis upon that account I tell you plainly Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances [in which] her Lord is.

. . . I will end this with once more desiring you to consider the matter impartially and take time for it. I do not desire an answer presently [at once], because I would not have you give a rash one. I shall come to your drawing-room to-morrow before you play, because you know I cannot make one [of the party]. At some other time we shall reason the business calmly, which I will willingly do, or anything else that may show it shall never be my fault if we do not live kindly together. Nor will I ever be other by choice, but your truly loving and affectionate sister.

Anne replied firmly the next day, saying among other things :

Your care of my present condition is extremely obliging. And if you would be pleased to add to it so far as on my account to recall your severe comment [about Sarah] (as I must beg leave to call it in a matter so tender to me and so little reasonable as I think to be imposed upon me that you would scarce require it from the meanest of your subjects), I should ever regard it as a very agreeable mark of your kindness to me. And I must as freely own that as I think that this proceeding can be for no other intent than to give me a very sensible mortification, so there is no misery that I cannot readily resolve to suffer rather than the thoughts of parting with her.¹

The Princess had hoped that her uncle Rochester would take this letter, but he had no intention of prejudicing his future by mingling in this dispute loaded with danger for all but the principals. By way of answer the Lord Chamberlain was directed to forbid Sarah to continue at the Cockpit.

¹ *Conduct*, pp. 43 seq., letters dated February 5 and 6, 1692.

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This was decisive, but in a manner different from that in which Queen Mary had expected. Anne resolved to share the banishment of her friend. Although she was every day expecting her confinement, she borrowed Sion House from the Duke of Somerset and transported herself and her household there with the utmost expedition.

The King and Queen now vented their disapproval in a series of very small actions. They endeavoured to persuade the Duke of Somerset to reclaim his house ; he regretted that as a gentleman he was unable to do so. They withdrew her guards from the Princess, and deprived her of all salutes and ceremonies. Later on, when she went to Bath, they even went so far as to make the Secretary of State write to the local mayor—a tallow-chandler, Sarah calls him—that he was not to accompany her officially to church. These puerilities humiliated only their authors. Anne gained a wide measure of public sympathy, and the Queen was wounded to learn that it was commonly said that she had no natural feeling for her own kin, neither for her father nor for her only sister.

We cannot wonder that Anne, pursued in so many petty ways and seeing her cherished friends ruined, as she thought, for her sake by the malice of her sister and the King, should have used in her intimate letters to Sarah bitter expressions about William. Macaulay says that she “called her brother-in-law sometimes the abortion, sometimes the monster, sometimes Caliban,” and describes this as “the style of a fishwoman.” The remark is mainly interesting as contemporary evidence of the high standard of erudition among the early Victorian fishwomen. The two sisters met only once again. After Anne had been delivered of a child which almost immediately died, the Queen visited her at Sion House ; but this was only to renew her command that Sarah should be dismissed. Anne, who was still weak and quivering from her labour and grieving for her dead baby, refused as resolutely as ever. These, except for some cold and formal letters, were the last words which passed between them.

Sarah was deeply concerned by the formidable hostilities which centred upon her personality. Her own letters do not

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survive, but we can guess their purport from Anne's replies. Again and again in these months of common disgrace and calamity (as it appeared to them) the Princess wrote to her friend, exhorting, commanding, imploring her on no account to suggest that she should relieve the situation by her departure.

The last time he [the Bishop of Worcester] was here I told him that you had several times desired that you might go from me, and I repeated the same thing again to him. For you may easily imagine I would not neglect doing you right on all occasions. But I beg it again for Christ Jesus' sake that you would never name it any more to me. For be assured, if you should ever do so cruel a thing as to leave me, from that moment I shall never enjoy one quiet hour. And should you do it without asking my consent (which if I ever give you may I never see the face of Heaven), I will shut myself up and never see the world more, but live where I may be forgot by human kind.

And again, at the end of a long letter :

Dear Mrs Freeman, farewell : I hope in Christ that you will never think more of leaving me for I would be sacrificed to do you the least service and nothing but death could ever make me part with you. For if it be possible I am every day more and more yours.¹

Did some protecting genius of England inspire Anne's generous, faithful heart? For surely it was in these fires of adversity, and almost persecution, that the links were forged by which the smallest and the strongest executive our country has ever known in the modern age was one day to be gripped together. The Cockpit friendships were the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise gleaming among the nations.

¹ *Conduct*, pp. 75, 81.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE TOWER

(1692-1693)

MEANWHILE the march of events was unfavourable both to the national and personal interests of Marlborough and to the vast Continental combinations of William. No sooner had the King set out upon the wars than the imminent menace of invasion fell upon the island he had left denuded of troops. Louvois had always been sceptical, and even scornful, of a Jacobite restoration ; but Louvois was dead, and Louis was freed from the trammels of his famous War Minister. Although his best opportunities had passed with the end of the Irish war and the Scottish revolts, he now planned a descent upon England. The French Channel and Mediterranean fleets, together with a multitude of transports and store-ships, were concentrated in the Norman and Breton ports. An expeditionary army of ten thousand desperate Irishmen from Limerick and ten thousand French regulars was assembled around Cherbourg. James was to be given his chance. Saint-Germains had for two years oppressed the French War Office with their assertions that England was ripe and ready for a restoration. Russell would betray or divert the English fleet ; Marlborough would answer for such parts of the Army as remained at home ; the Princess Anne would reassure the Church of England. The Jacobites of the northern counties were under arms ; the merchants of the City were favourable ; the temper of the English people was rancorously hostile to the Dutch. William was now in Flanders, and once the true King landed—with an adequate force—he would drive in his coach to Whitehall. Now was the time when all these assertions so confidently reiterated by the unhappy exiles, so buoyed up by fond hopes, so backed

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by distortion, fabrication, and forgery, would be put to the test. James's opportunity had come.

It was not until the middle of April, from important papers captured on a small vessel, that the French designs became known to the English Government. Feverish but vigorous preparations were made for defence by land and sea. Some regiments were brought from Ireland, others recalled from Flanders, and the English dockyards resounded with the preparation of the fleets. Despite stubborn adverse Jacobite currents, the nation had but one idea—to repel the French papist invaders and above all the despised and hated Irish. James's declaration, framed by Melfort, "the evil genius of the house of Stuart," as he has been well called, apprised the nation of its peril. All the old arrogance, religious and political, and a new vindictiveness to pay off recent scores, were reflected in this wanton document. Large numbers of persons, ranging from the greatest nobles to the rough, ignorant fishermen who had manhandled their sovereign upon his flight to Faversham, were specifically excluded from the amnesty. Marlborough's name figured among the proscribed; but this, we are assured by the Jacobites, was only from a desire not to compromise the delicacy of his position. As upon the approach of the Spanish Armada, all England was alert. But everything turned upon the Admiral. Russell, like Marlborough, had talked with the Jacobite agents: William and Mary feared, and James fervently believed, that he would play the traitor to his country and his profession. James was sure that the fleet was on his side, and had furnished Versailles with lists of the admirals and captains on whom he counted. Now would be proved what substance there was in all these tales. Would that every Jacobite pretension could be brought to an equally conclusive trial!

According to the Jacobites, Russell bluntly told their agent, Floyd, that, much as he loved James and loathed William's Government, if he met the French fleet at sea he would do his best to destroy it, "even though King James himself were on board." He kept his word. "If your officers play you false," he said to the fleetmen on the day of battle, "overboard with

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them, and myself the first." We have no doubt that Marlborough, his friend and fellow-intriguer, would have done the same with the soldiers had he had them in command. But his lot was hard. An age of revolutions and conspiracies, when all foundations quaked, had produced a tribe of professional plot-denouncers. Titus Oates, living in retirement upon his Government pension, held a veritable school for the making of bogus plots from the exposure of which much wealth and celebrity might be gained. Moreover, there was no lack of material. A rascal named Fuller had already this year from his debtors' prison offered blood-curdling revelations to Parliament, and had been exposed and convicted only by the exceptional diligence of the House of Commons. Now, at this grievous moment, came forth a disciple of Oates and Fuller named Young, also a rogue and a criminal, also in gaol, who devised a scheme to win himself riches and consideration by accusing well-known and likely men of murderous conspiracy.¹

Young was by his own confession an expert forger. He had obtained a specimen of Marlborough's signature by writing to him about the character of a servant. He drew up a document purporting to be a bond of association between certain persons to take the Prince of Orange, dead or alive, and to restore King James. He forged the names of Marlborough, Cornbury, Archbishop Sancroft, and the harmless Bishop of Rochester, Sprat, with some others, as signatories. His confederate, Blackhead, hid this poisonous evidence in a flowerpot in the house of the unwitting Bishop of Rochester. Young then warned the Cabinet of their peril and where the proof could be found. Above all things, he said, they must search the Bishop's flowerpots. Under the threat of invasion, on the eve of fateful battle with the fleet commanded by a suspected admiral, a panic-fierce mood ruled at the council-board. Marlborough and one or two leading Jacobites were arrested out of hand and sent to the Tower. Three members of the Council, Lords Devonshire, Bradford,

¹ Cf. "A Relation of the Late Wicked Contrivance of Stephen Blackhead and Robert Young," by the Bishop of Rochester, in *Harleian Miscellany*, x, i.

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and Montagu, kept their heads; they declined to sign the warrant upon the evidence of a single witness of whose credibility the most that could be said was that "he had not yet had his ears cropped." But Marlborough slept the night of May 4 a prisoner of State upon a charge of high treason.

Stringent search was now made of the Bishop's palace, and almost every flowerpot was examined. But there was one which, because it stood near the servants' quarters, was overlooked. In this lay the paper which, if discovered at that moment, might have cost not only the Bishop but our hero his life. The officers of the Crown returned to Whitehall with the Bishop in custody, but no evidence. Young then procured from his prison cell the recovery of the document, and sent it with another legend to the Council.

But meanwhile a fortnight had passed and great events had happened. On May 19/29 the English and Dutch fleets, which had effected their junction before the French were ready, encountered Tourville with the main French naval power off Cape La Hogue. The forces were impressive in their number, but Russell's armada, which carried forty thousand men and seven thousand guns, was the stronger by ninety-nine ships to forty-four. Both sides fought hard, and Tourville was beaten. His flagship, *Le Soleil Royal*, named in honour of Louis XIV, was first battered and then burned to the water's edge. The French fleet was scattered and driven into its ports. But this was not the end. Russell and his admirals, three of the most daring of whom were counted on the Jacobite lists as pledged and faithful adherents of King James, followed the beaten navy into its harbours. For five successive days the fighting continued. The fugitive war-ships were cut out under the shore batteries by flotillas of hardy English row-boats; the store-ships and many of the transports were burned; and the whole apparatus of invasion was destroyed under the very eyes of the King it was to have borne to his native shore.

The battle of Cape La Hogue, with its consequential actions, effaced the memories of Beachy Head. More than that, it broke decisively for the whole of the wars of William and

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Anne all French pretensions to supremacy at sea. It was the Trafalgar of the seventeenth century. We invite the reader to judge whether fact is not stronger than fiction; whether substance is not more solid than shadow. Because Russell had flirted with the Jacobite agents; because these agents had vapourized to the Court at Saint-Germains; because James had wanted to believe all his agents told him, and made the most of it to Louis; and because the Jacobite writers have invented and written whatever they pleased about him, Russell stands convicted before history as a "villain" and a "traitor." This shattering victory and noble feat of arms counts for nothing in his favour. Macpherson, Dalrymple, Macaulay, and the docile flock of scrap-nibblers who have browsed upon their pastures, have managed hitherto to twist history and reality to his condemnation. We submit to modern judgment two propositions about him: that he was wrong and foolish to have trafficked with the Jacobite agents, but that he was quite right to beat the French and ruin King James's cause, which was on the whole rather more important.

The fears of the Council and the excitement of the public were calmed by the victory. Lords Huntingdon and Scarsdale, who had been arrested on other grounds at the same time as Marlborough, were set at liberty. William, who had been perturbed by the irregularity of these arrests, wrote to the Council expressing his doubts about such serious steps.¹ Nevertheless, so strong were the feelings of the Queen that Marlborough was still kept a close prisoner in the Tower. Sarah came from Brentford to London in order to be near him, to help in his defence, and to agitate for his release. No one was allowed to visit him except upon the authority of the Secretary of State, and we have consequently a series of orders signed by Nottingham giving Sarah and some others access to him. Among the few who faced the displeasure of the Queen, Lord Bradford was conspicuous. As is usual with people in such a position, the Marlboroughs found few friends. Other nearer trouble fell upon them. On May 22 their younger son Charles died.

¹ *Correspondence of William III and Portland*, i, 171, "une chose bien délicate."

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Anne's letters are touching in their fidelity and tender solicitude.

I hear Lord Marlborough is sent to the Tower ; and though I am certain they have nothing against him, and expected by your letter it would be so, yet I was struck when I was told it ; for methinks it is a dismal thing to have one's friends sent to that place. I have a thousand melancholy thoughts, and cannot help fearing they should hinder you from coming to me ; though how they can do that without making you a prisoner I cannot imagine.

I am just told by pretty good hands, that as soon as the wind turns westerly,² there will be a guard set upon the Prince and me. If you hear there is any such thing designed, and that 'tis easy to you, pray let me see you before the wind changes ; for afterwards one does not know whether they will let one have opportunities of speaking to one another. But let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the satisfaction of seeing dear Mrs Freeman ; and I swear I would live on bread and water, between four walls, with her, without repining ; for as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness, in this world or the next, if ever she proves false to you.¹

And :

I give dear Mrs Freeman a thousand thanks for her kind letter, which gives me an account of her concerns, and that is what I desire to know more than any other news. I shall reckon the days and hours, and think the time very long till the term is out, for both your sake and my Lord Marlborough's, that he may be at liberty and your mind at ease. You do not say anything of your health which makes me hope you are well, at least not worse than when you were here.

And again, with asperity :

I am sorry with all my heart dear Mrs Freeman meets with so many delays ; but it is a comfort they cannot keep Lord Marlborough in the Tower longer than the end of the [legal] term ; and I hope, when Parliament sits, care will be taken that people may

¹ *Conduct*, pp. 42 seq.

² This wind liberated the French fleets from Brest.

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not be clapped up for nothing, or else there will be no living in quiet for anybody but insolent Dutch and sneaking mercenary Englishmen.

In a further letter :

. . . And there is no misery I cannot readily resolve to suffer, rather than the thought of parting from you. And I do swear I would rather be torn to pieces than alter this my resolution.

And again :

My dear Mrs Freeman was in so dismal a way when she went from hence, that I cannot forbear asking how she does, and if she has yet any hopes of Lord Marlborough's being soon at liberty. For God's sake have a care of your dear self, and give as little way to melancholy thoughts as you can. . . . I fancy asses' milk would do you good, and that is what you might take morning or afternoon, as it is most convenient. . . . I will not fail of being with my dear Mrs Freeman about five or six o'clock unless you are to go to the Tower.

With a view no doubt to helping her friends, Anne also wrote the Queen a respectful letter :

StON

May 20

I have now, God be thanked, recovered my strength well enough to go abroad. And though my duty and inclination would both lead me to wait upon your Majesty as soon as I am able to do it, yet I have of late had the misfortune of being so much under your Majesty's displeasure as to apprehend there may be hard constructions made upon anything I either do or not do with the most respectful intentions. And I am now in doubt whether the same arguments, that have prevailed with your Majesty to forbid people from showing their usual respects to me, may not be carried so much farther as not to permit me to pay my duty to you. That, I acknowledge, would be a great increase of affliction to me, and nothing but your Majesty's own command shall ever willingly make me submit to it. For whatever reason I may think in my own mind I have to complain of being hardly used, yet I will strive to hide it as much as possible. And though I will not pretend to live at the Cockpit, unless you would be so kind as to make it easy to me, yet wherever I am, I will endeavour always to give the constant marks of duty and respect,

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which I have in my heart for your Majesty, as becomes Your Majesty's very affectionate sister and servant,

ANNE

The answer was chilling :

I have received yours by the Bishop of Worcester and have very little to say to it, since you cannot but know that as I never used compliments, so now they will not serve.

'Tis none of my fault we live at this distance, and I have endeavoured to show my willingness to do otherwise. And I will do no more. Don't give yourself any unnecessary trouble, for be assured it is not words can make us live together as we ought. You know what I required of you. And I now tell you, if you doubted it before, that I cannot change my mind but expect to be complied with, or you must not wonder if I doubt of your kindness. You can give me no other marks that will satisfy me. Nor can I put any other construction upon your actions than what all the world must do that sees them. These things don't hinder me being very glad to hear you are so well and wishing you may continue so, and that you may yet, while 'tis in your power, oblige me to be your affectionate sister,

MARIE R.

There is little doubt that the King and Queen, heating each other in their anger, explored the question of curtailing Anne's Parliamentary grant. They encountered a steady resistance from Godolphin at the Treasury. Moreover, the House of Commons would have resented any such proposal. Rumours, however, of the project reached Sarah through a sure channel. She continued to suggest that she should relieve the tension by departing—at any rate, for a time. The Princess's attitude was magnificent :

I really long to know how my dear Mrs Freeman got home ; and now I have this opportunity of writing, she must give me leave to tell her, if she should ever be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs Morley, she will rob her of all the joy and quiet of her life ; for if that day should come, I could never enjoy a happy minute, and I swear to you I would shut myself up and never see a creature. You may easily see all this would have come upon me, if you had not been. If you do but remember what the Q. said to me the night before your Lord was turned out of all ; then she begun

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to pick quarrels ; and if they should take off twenty or thirty thousand pound, have I not lived upon as little before ? When I was first married we had but twenty (it is true indeed the King [Charles] was so kind to pay my debts), and if it should come to that again, what retrenchment is there in my family I would not willingly make and be glad of that pretence to do it ? Never fancy, dear Mrs Freeman, if what you fear should happen, that you are the occasion . . . ; therefore rest satisfied you are no ways the cause ; and let me beg once more, for God's sake, that you would never mention parting more, no nor so much as think of it ; and if you should ever leave me, be assured it would break your faithful Mrs Morley's heart.

Sarah having requested that Prince George should know the position, Anne wrote :

In obedience to dear Mrs Freeman I have told the Prince all she desired me, and he is so far from being of another opinion, if there had been occasion he would have strengthened me in my resolutions, and we both beg you would never mention so cruel a thing any more. Can you think either of us so wretched that for the sake of twenty thousand pound, and to be tormented from morning to night with flattering knaves and fools, we should forsake those we have such obligations to, and that we are so certain we are the occasion of all their misfortunes ? . . . And which is much more, how would my conscience reproach me for having sacrificed my honour, reputation and all the substantial comforts of this life for transitory interest, which, even to those who make it their idol, can never afford any real satisfaction, much less to a virtuous mind ? No, my dear Mrs Freeman, never believe your faithful Mrs Morley will ever submit. She can wait with patience for a sunshine day, and if she does not live to see it, yet she hopes England will flourish again.

Meanwhile Marlborough had recourse to the Council. To Danby, the Lord President, he wrote : ¹

Having been informed that it is now publicly discoursed in Westminster Hall to-day that a letter under my hand was to be produced to the grand jury, to induce them to find a bail against me, I beg leave to assure your Lordship, upon my honour and credit, that if any such letter be pretended, it must and will, upon

¹ These three letters are in Wolseley, ii, 273-274, 283.

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examination, appear so plainly to have been forged, that as it can be of no credit or advantage to the Government, so I doubt not but your Lordship's justice will be ready to protect me from so injurious a proceeding, who am, etc.

And to Devonshire, the Lord High Steward :

I am so confident of my innocence, and so convinced, if there be any such letter, that it must appear to be forged, and made use of only to keep me in prison, that I cannot doubt but your Lordship will be so kind as to let me find your protection against such a proceeding, which will be a reproach to the Government as well as an injury to

Yours, etc.

He also used his rights under the law, invoked the Habeas Corpus Act, and demanded admission to bail. To Halifax he wrote :

My Counsel being to move the Court of King's Bench for my Habeas Corpus the beginning of next term, and [I] being very certain of my own innocence, and that no instance can be shown why I should not be bailed, I desire the favour of your Lordship to be there and be one of my sureties for my appearance, not knowing yet how many they may require to be found for me ; I shall be unwilling to give your Lordship this trouble without a necessity, and in that case I shall always own it as the greatest obligation to your Lordship's most obedient

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On June 11 Young and his accomplice, Blackhead, were brought before the Privy Council. The Bishop has left us the following clear and well-documented account. It is an intimate and invaluable picture of the methods of those days. We see the care and zeal in which the Cabinet Ministers did their duty, Nottingham's long and untiring examination of the witnesses, the search for the truth, the ceremonious treatment of the accused prelate. The event was dramatic. Confronted with Bishop Sprat and under the stern eyes of the Council, Blackhead, who had already weakened, broke down completely, and confessed his crime. We have the following dialogue :

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : Blackhead, last time you confessed

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you brought the Bishop of Rochester a letter from Robert Young, under the false name of Dr Hooke.

BLACKHEAD : Yes, I did.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : Can you know that letter when you see it ?

BLACKHEAD : I cannot tell, I doubt I cannot know it.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : Here it is (*and it was given into his hand*) ; is that the same letter you delivered the Bishop ?

BLACKHEAD : I am not sure it is.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : Consider it well ; look on the superscription, you cannot but remember that. You began to be somewhat ingenuous last Friday ; if you relapse it will fare the worse with you.

BLACKHEAD : Yes, this may be the letter ; this is the very same letter.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : But what made you, when you were at Bromley the second time, so earnestly desire of the Bishop's butler, and his other servants, that you might see the rooms in the house, especially his study ?

BLACKHEAD : No, I do not remember that I desired to see the study. The house I might out of curiosity.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : But here are some of the Bishop's servants without, who are ready to swear, that you pressed very often to get a sight of his study. . . .

BLACKHEAD : I cannot deny that I did desire to see the Bishop's study. . . .

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : What reason had you to be so importunate to see that or any of the other rooms ? Had you any paper about you that you designed to drop or leave in any part of the Bishop's house ?

Here Blackhead stopped as very loth to out with it ; till divers of the lords urged him to tell the truth. At last he went on, though with much hesitancy.

BLACKHEAD : Yes, I must confess I had a paper in my pocket which I designed to put somewhere in the house.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : What did you with it ?

BLACKHEAD : I did leave it in the parlour next the kitchen.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM : In what part of the parlour ?

BLACKHEAD : In the flowerpot in the chimney.

At this the Bishop broke in. " Good Lord bless me ! " he cried. " I seriously protest. I never heard that any

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paper was found there by my servants. To be sure they would have brought it me." And he offered to send his servants in quest.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Nay, my lord, there is no need of that testimony now. For this fellow has said already more than they know. He has confessed not only that he desired to see your house, and particularly your study, but that he did leave a paper somewhere in it; and that he did leave one in your parlour and in the flowerpot of the chimney. . . . Blackhead, what paper was it you left in the Bishop's chimney?

BLACKHEAD: It was the association.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Was it this paper here (*showing the association that lay upon the table*)?

BLACKHEAD: Yes, it was.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: How came you by it? and who advised you to lodge it there?

BLACKHEAD: I had it from Mr Young and he advised me to leave it in the Bishop's house, as I did.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Did Young direct you to put it in the flowerpot in the parlour?

BLACKHEAD: Yes he did, and I put it there accordingly. . . .

The forged document was now produced and handed round. As we have to deal in Marlborough's life with other charges equally elaborately presented, we give it here as Sprat recollected it.

That we, whose names were subscribed, should solemnly promise, in the presence of God, to contribute our utmost assistance towards King James's recovery of his kingdoms; that to this end, we would have ready to meet him, at his landing, thirty thousand men well armed; that we would seize upon the person of the Princess of Orange, dead or alive; and take care, that some strong garrison should be forthwith delivered into his hands; and furnish him with a considerable sum of money, for the support of his army.

March 20, 1691

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SALISBURY

W. CANT.

THO. ROFFEN.¹

CORNBURY

BASIL FIREBRACE

JOHN WILCOXE

¹ This is Spratt's signature, as Bishop of Rochester.

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The Bishop was startled at the perfection of the forgery. "I am very much amazed," he said, "to see my hand so well counterfeited; all the difference is they have done me the favour to write it finer than I can: otherwise I acknowledge it is so like that I verily believe I myself, had I seen it in another place, should have been apt to doubt whether it were of my writing or no. I am confident it might, upon the first blush, deceive the best friends I have."

Here Godolphin intervened, and his friendly purpose is easily discernible. "My Lords," he said, "I am very well acquainted with Archbishop Sancroft's hand, and here it is almost exactly counterfeited." He added that the Earl of Marlborough's hand had been so well feigned in a letter that had been written by Young himself that it was very difficult for his most intimate friends to observe any distinction.

Young was now brought before the Council.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM (*taking up the association and showing it to Young*): Did you not give this paper to Blackhead and order him to put it in a chimney in the Bishop of Rochester's house, and into a flowerpot, if there were any?

YOUNG: No, I never desired him to carry it thither, or to put it into a flowerpot.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What say you, Blackhead?

BLACKHEAD: Mr Young did give me that paper, and directed me to leave it in the Bishop's house; and if I could, to put it in a flowerpot in some room; which I did, in the parlour.

YOUNG: There is no such matter. I absolutely deny it.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM, LORD SYDNEY, AND OTHERS OF THE COUNCILLORS: Why, then, did you give us such express directions to send and search the flowerpots among other places in the Bishop's house?

YOUNG: I said nothing of flowerpots. I bid you take care that the Bishop's person should be exactly searched; because when he went abroad he carried the association about him; when he was at home, he put it in some private place, for fear of surprise. Perhaps I might say, in the chimney.

THE COUNCILLORS: Nay, we all well remember, you particularly mentioned the flowerpots.

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YOUNG: This is a combination between the Bishop of Rochester and Blackhead to baffle the whole discovery of the plot.

EARL OF DANBY: Young, thou art the strangest creature that ever I heard of. Dost thou think we could imagine that the Bishop of Rochester would combine with this thy confederate to have an association written with his own hand to it and then laid it in his own house in a flowerpot there? which, if it had been found must have endangered his life; and we see it was the most remarkable good fortune to him that almost ever happened to any man, that it was not found there.

During this whole examination, says the Bishop, though Young's forgery was so evidently proved by the confession of his own companion and instrument, yet "he behaved himself with a daring, unconcerned confidence, with a bold and erect countenance, though it had naturally very much of a villain in it." Thus was the whole of this pack of lies blown to pieces, and the Bishop, overflowing with gratitude to God and to the Council, returned to his diocese.

There was now no case of any kind against Marlborough. Not even one of the two witnesses necessary to sustain a charge of treason was available; and the document which incriminated him was a proved and exposed forgery. On June 15, after an imprisonment of six weeks, he succeeded in bringing his case before the Court of the King's Bench on a writ of Habeas Corpus. The Government demanded sureties and bail for £6000. Halifax did not fail him, neither did Shrewsbury. Both these lords, with two other persons, became his sureties. Their action was resented by the Queen. These two famous builders of our constitutional history were forthwith struck off the Privy Council. Marlborough's name was found still, apparently by oversight, upon the roll. The oversight was repaired.

Marlborough was now free, and the Cockpit group reunited at Berkeley House in a companionship of wrath and misfortune. The ordeal had been severe, and the escape narrow. The forgeries of Young had been so perfect that

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Marlborough admitted himself when shown the document that he could have hardly believed that it was not his own autograph. Such a plot, had it not miscarried, might well have sent him during the invasion panic to the scaffold. Moreover, he might expect that at any moment some one or other of the Jacobite agents with whom he had consorted and through whom he had communicated with Saint-Germains might come forward with confirmatory revelations. However, his nerves were steel, and neither imminent peril nor prolonged strain affected his poise and serenity. Nor did he in any respect alter his course. He continued through various secret channels to preserve exactly the same shadowy relations with King James—neither less nor more—as before his disgrace. He persisted in his opposition to the King by every means open to him. Parliament had been prorogued and was not to meet till November. “The interval,” says the hostile Dalrymple,¹

gave time for Lord Marlborough, who was enraged at what he called the King’s ingratitude, to the Whigs and to himself, and whose favour with the next heir to the throne, high character in his profession, and above all, whose power of industry and intrigue made his influence, though he was only a soldier, and in prison [on bail], be felt in every line of life in the kingdom, to prepare a regular and concerted opposition in Parliament.

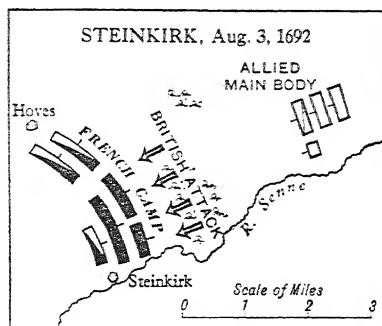
And now from the war came news which must have gnawed his soul. As in 1691, the campaign had opened with a brilliant French success. Louis XIV had laid siege to the hitherto inviolate fortress of Namur before William, through the tardiness of his allies, could be ready. Vauban, under Louis, conducted the siege, while Luxembourg with an army of eighty thousand men stood between William and its relief. Once again the unlucky head of the Grand Alliance and his army watched impotently the fall of one of their most important fortresses. But worse was to come. In August William marched by night with his whole army to attack Luxembourg, whose forces were somewhat divided. The French were surprised near Steinkirk in the early morning. Their

¹ iii, Part II, 20.

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advanced troops were overwhelmed and routed, and for an hour confusion reigned in their camp. But Luxembourg was equal to the emergency, and managed to draw out an ordered line of battle. The British infantry formed the forefront of the allied attack. Eight splendid regiments under General Mackay charged and broke the Swiss in fighting as fierce as had been seen in Europe in living memory. Luxembourg launched the Household troops of France upon the British division, already strained by its exertions, and after a furious struggle fought mostly with sword and bayonet beat them back.

Meanwhile from all sides the French advanced, and their reinforcements began to reach the field. Count Solms, the Dutch officer and William's relation, who had replaced Marlborough in command of the British contingent, had already earned the cordial dislike of its officers and men. He knew their feelings and returned them with interest. Now, with a callous remark, he refused to send Mackay the help for which he begged. A Dutch general on the opposite flank whom we now meet for the first time, the valiant Overkirk, brought two battalions to their aid with remarkable effect. But for this, that British force of which Marlborough had been so proud the year before would have been cut to pieces. As it was they escaped with a loss of their two best generals, Mackay and Lanier, and of half their number, more than three thousand being killed or wounded. William seemed unable to control the battle. Witness of this cruel disaster, we are assured that he shed bitter tears as he watched the slaughter and exclaimed, "Oh, my poor English!" But what was the good of that? By noon the whole of the allied army was in retreat, and although the losses of seven or eight thousand men on either side were equal, the French proclaimed their victory throughout Europe.



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No record exists of the feelings with which Marlborough received this news : no letter of his is extant, no conversation has been reported. But it may well have been the hardest of all the blows that befell him in this period of his life. Here were his own men, the very troops whom he had paraded with pardonable enthusiasm before Count Dohna, and called "invincible." All the qualities which regimental soldiers can show in war they had proved to Europe. Their conduct was glorified by their enemies no less than in the camps of the allies. It was not, therefore, any fault of theirs that they had not proved invincible. The fault lay elsewhere. It lay with the prince who, although he was an illustrious sovereign and statesman, would not do justice to his own discernment, and who, although he himself lacked the qualities of a great commander, would not gather around him the men who could do the work, but allowed every kind of irrelevant prejudice or bias to stand between him and the faithful care of his English troops in the field.

The wheel of fortune spins with infinite caprice, and no one can tell whether it was Marlborough's good luck or bad that tied him in England unemployed and a prisoner of State while Count Solms cast the English away at Steinkirk. Had William treated him a little better, had he placed him in his old command, Marlborough would have held Solms' authority in the battle. Could he have altered the stroke of the field, could he within the limits of his sphere have imposed a harmony upon the whole intense event? Might he not have been involved in the insoluble riddles of half-policies and half-controls, and been found unable to free himself from the stifling cloak of circumstance? Might he not have flashed away in the accidents of battle and died with Mackay or instead of him? But of this last no one can complain ; it is in the soldier's contract. Or might he have gained for William the one thing that the head of the Grand Alliance lacked, and added laurels of victory to those brows upon which some said he had already set the crown of England?

He had sunk now to the minor and unpleasant position of being a critic of mishandled affairs with whose main intention

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he agreed. This condition was to rule him for a long time, as our short lives go. The Court guerrilla against Anne continued, and she was subjected to many petty impertinences and something very like what we should now call a society boycott. Marlborough presented his general case to Parliament when it met in November. He found support which in modern times might be decisive. The House of Lords ignored the Royal Speech and proceeded to examine the causes why certain of their members had been unlawfully imprisoned. It was argued that once the charges were dropped the retention of bail and the refusal to discharge recognizances were infringements of privilege. Acrimonious debates ensued. The Constable of the Tower, the Treasury Solicitor, even the judges of the High Court, were summoned. William found himself in the presence of one of those tensely wrought, sternly measured constitutional movements towards which he had been taught in the days of Charles II that English kings should not be unbending. He used the royal prerogative to discharge Marlborough from his recognizances. This grievance removed, both Houses turned to the war.

The most savage debates took place upon the conduct of Count Solms. The hatred felt against him is indescribable. His airs, his prejudice, his incompetence, his brutal levity in the crisis of battle, were all arraigned. He had sent, it was asserted, the English to a butchery, had left them in the lurch, and had even mocked at their sacrifice. "Now we shall see," he had exclaimed when Mackay was almost cut off, "how the bulldogs will come off!" The British Army nourishes a generous tradition, and all is forgiven to a soldier who dies bravely in the field. Yet when, a year later, in the carnage of Landen, Count Solms fell mortally wounded, English officers and English camps accused him of want of fortitude in the agonies of death. Bitter reproaches arising from undoubted wrongs!

The Lords carried an address praying that no English general should be subordinated to a Dutchman, whatever his rank. In the Commons the Court, or, as we should now say, Ministerial, orators inculcated precepts of humility. Seymour,

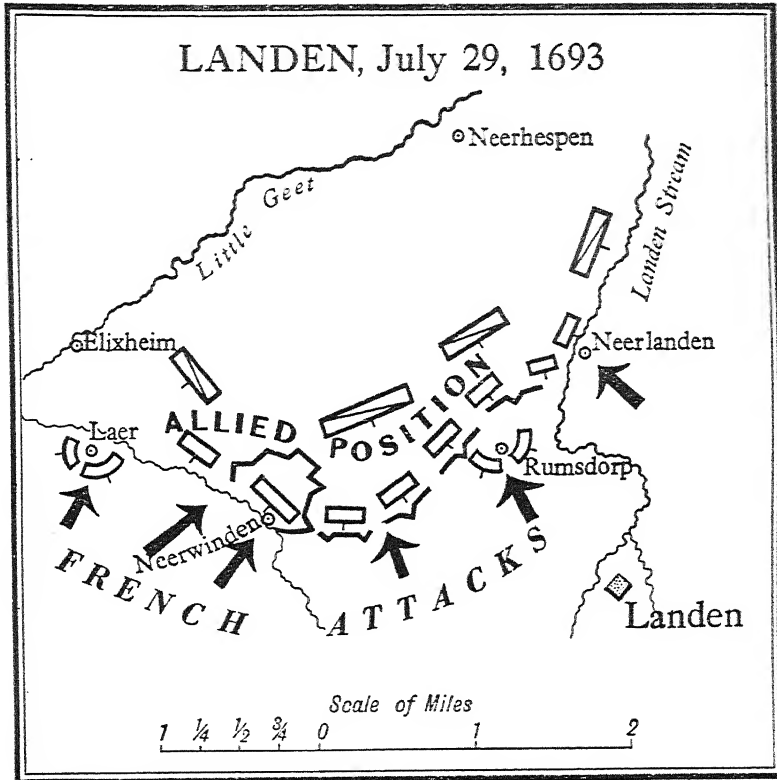
whose famous independence had at this time been soothed by a place at council, descanted at large upon the inferiority of British generals. Unhappily we had no generals. We might have good captains and majors or even colonels, but no officers fit by their experience or qualities to rank with the high professionals of the Continent. Other speakers chanted this dirge of national self-contempt. The Commons were not convinced. One Member had the temerity to declare that there were ten English officers who would be marshals of France if they were Frenchmen. This was certainly an exaggeration. In the end the Commons pressed less strongly upon the King than the Lords. The conspiracy of Grandval, a Jacobite enthusiast set on by Saint-Germains to murder the King, had rallied strong English sympathies in his behalf; and the power of the Crown proved overwhelming. If William's government could bear the odium of Solms at Steinkirk, it could bear anything. The King returned brief answers to the addresses, and supplies were voted for another mismanaged and disastrous year of war.

In July 1693 was fought the great battle of Landen, unmatched in its slaughter except by Malplaquet and Borodino for two hundred years. The French were in greatly superior strength, having 96 battalions and 210 squadrons to William's 65 battalions and 150 squadrons. Nevertheless the King determined to withstand their attack, and constructed almost overnight a system of strong entrenchments and palisades in the enclosed country along the Landen stream, within the windings of the Geet. The battle resolved itself into an intense struggle for the village of Neerwinden, thrice captured, twice retaken. After an heroic resistance the allies were driven from their position by the French with a loss of nearly twenty thousand men, the attackers losing less than half this total. Nevertheless William rallied the remnants of his army, gathered reinforcements, and, since Luxembourg neglected to pursue his victory, was able surprisingly to maintain himself in the field.

There was an episode in the battle which is of interest to this account. The Duke of Berwick was now a General of

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rising distinction in the French Army. Six French brigades marched abreast to the first assault of Neerwinden. Berwick, who commanded the two centre brigades, carried the village and drove the enemy to its farther end. But the heavy fire in the open ground on either side of the village led the four



brigades on the right and left to crowd into it, and the whole force, taken at this disadvantage, was counter-attacked on both flanks by the allies and driven out, leaving Berwick and the survivors of his command to their fate. "I found myself at last," writes Berwick,¹ "completely cut off. Seeing this, I resolved to escape, if possible, by the plain, and having taken out my white cockade, passed for an officer of the enemy."

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 113.

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This he was well qualified to do, for his uniform was not dissimilar, and he was an Englishman.

Unfortunately, Brigadier Churchill,¹ brother to Lord Churchill, now Duke of Marlborough, and my uncle, came up, and recollecting [recognizing] the only Aid-de-camp I had with me, suspected immediately that I might be there, and advancing to me, made me his prisoner. After mutual salutations he told me, he must conduct me to the Prince of Orange. We galloped a considerable time without meeting with him; at last we found him at a great distance from the place of action, in a bottom, where neither friends nor enemies were to be seen. The Prince made me a very polite compliment, to which I only replied by a low bow: after looking stedfastly at me for an instant, he put on his hat, and I mine; then he ordered me to be carried to Lewe.²

Berwick's description of William's posture when he was brought before him is no reproach to the proved courage of the King, who as the battle deepened fought desperately in person to retrieve the day. His subsequent treatment of Berwick seems, however, to show that he was angered at Berwick's repulse of his courteous address. "After the battle," writes Berwick,

M. de Luxemburg had demanded, agreeable to the terms of the cartel, that I should be sent back at the end of a fortnight; on his side he had released all the General Officers of the enemy, that were prisoners on their parole; but notwithstanding this, they detained me at Antwerp. It happening, however, that the Duke of Ormond could not, on account of his wounds, avail himself of the leave which was granted to the rest; M. de Luxemburg informed the enemy, that he should not part with the Duke, till they had released me. He also summoned Lieutenant-General Scravemore, and the other officers to return to Namur. This produced the intended effect, and I joined our army at the camp of Nivelle. The Prince of Orange certainly had a design of sending me prisoner to England, where I should have been closely confined in the Tower of London, though that would have been contrary to all the rules of war; for, though he pretended that I was his subject, and consequently a rebel, yet he had no right to

¹ George Churchill.

² *Memoirs*, pp. 113-114.

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treat me as such, since I was not taken prisoner in a territory that belonged to him. We were in the country of the King of Spain, and I had the honour to serve as Lieutenant-General in the army of the Most Christian King ; so that the Prince of Orange could be considered in no other light on that ground than as an auxiliary.¹

Of all these stirring events, which at so many points touched him intimately, Marlborough continued to be a mere spectator.

¹ *Memoirs*, p. 116.

CHAPTER XXV
THE CAMARET BAY LETTER

(1694)

EARLY in 1694 King William and his Council planned a descent on Brest.

The difficulty of forcing the French to general actions in the open sea, the impossibility of blocking up their fleets for any considerable time at Brest in the stormy sea of the Bay of Biscay, or at Toulon in the swelling sea of the Gulph of Lyons, had satisfied the King, that the only way to conquer the fleets of France was in their own harbours.¹

It was also a definite part of the allied war policy to keep the northern coast of France in apprehension of attack, and to draw troops and munitions thither from the main front in Flanders.

The secret was ill-kept or perhaps deliberately bruited about, and became the common talk of London.² The information reached Paris. Already at the beginning of April King Louis had received news "from several sources that an attack on Brest is intended by 7000 British troops and the combined navies of Britain and Holland."³ This information, howsoever obtained, was accurate even to the number of the troops. On April 4/14 he moved two regiments of horse and six battalions of coastguards to the place, and instructed Vauban, then inspecting the fortresses of Normandy, to look to the defences. Vauban executed his orders on an elaborate scale but in a leisurely manner, and the reinforcements came in gradually. Nevertheless by the end of May Brest was in the highest condition of prepared-

¹ Dalrymple, iii, Part III, 59.

² See Paget's references to Boyer, Ralph, Kennet, Oldmixon, etc., in *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 27. Luttrell, *Relation*, iii, 328. *Per contra*, Macaulay, iv, 510, quoting L'Hermitage.

³ Louis XIV to Vauban, *cit.* Wolsley, ii, 314.

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ness, and ten or twelve thousand additional regular troops were on the spot in pursuance of orders issued nearly two months before. These steps were taken by the French upon the reports of their own intelligence service and agents; and that they had been taken was known on both sides of the Channel. The Jacobites at Saint-Germains knew it;¹ William himself and his Council knew it.² The secrets of both attack and defence had leaked out; the counter-measures had been or were being taken; and the English Government were aware of both facts. Such was the position in the last week in April.

For what followed we must refer to the Nairne Papers, the origin of which an earlier chapter has described. These can all now be seen in the Carte Collection in the Bodleian. Those containing the charges against the Revolution leaders are eight in number.

- (1) The James Memorial.
- (2) The Melfort Instructions.
- (3) The Landen Memorial.
- (4) The Berkeley Report.
- (5) The Sunderland Memorial.
- (6) The Arran Letter.
- (7) The Floyd Report.
- (8) The Camaret Bay Letter.³

With these last two, which alone concern Marlborough, we must now deal.

Saint-Germains were naturally anxious to maintain credit with their French hosts for knowledge of England and all that passed there. Floyd, Groom of the Bedchamber to James II, had been again in London since March. He sought

¹ Floyd Report, Macpherson, i, 480.

² King William's letter of June 18 to Shrewsbury, Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 457.

³ A detailed and searching analysis of each of these documents was published in *The English Historical Review* of April 1897 by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Arthur Parnell, R.E. He arrived at the conclusion that they were not only thoroughly untrustworthy, but in most cases, especially the Camaret Bay Letter, actual fabrications. His argument was countered in the same review, in July 1920, by Professor G. Davis. The two articles read together give a comprehensive view of the controversy.

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interviews with the leading personages to whom he had access. According to his account, which is the seventh of the eight Nairne Papers, he was received in the third week of April 1694 by Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Russell, and Marlborough with all proper expressions of loyalty to the exiled sovereign. Marlborough and Shrewsbury, he states, told him nothing. Russell, the Admiral, was affable, voluble, and vague. "What would *you* do [to help James]," he asked Floyd, who was an ex-naval officer, "if you were in my place?" Floyd replied that obviously in the case of an invasion he could "avoid the French fleet and allow it to pass." The Admiral said he would not do that, although it was once his intention. Floyd thereupon himself—as he says—raised the question of Brest.

I proposed to him that since *some descent would be attempted infallibly upon the coast of France this summer, which would naturally draw down the troops to Brest* or to other places on the coast according to the designs upon them, he might send your Majesty [King James] information of this, and [also¹] give you time to *prepare transports this summer: and that towards autumn when it was necessary to disarm the large ships and send convoys to America, etc.,* he would be a judge of those which it would be proper to keep in the channel, and accordingly might retain those which he had gained [over] in the summer, and either send the rest into the harbours or employ them as convoys; and being by these means master of those that remained, he might join the French to transport the troops which would be *necessary for accompanying your Majesty into England.*

Thus the Jacobite agent, feeling his way, tested the Admiral, mixing up the question of Brest inconsequently with general talk about invasion or restoration, but conveying with clear intention to the naval Commander-in-Chief the fact that he already knew the project he had in hand; and seeking by this means to extract from him additional information. Russell fell back warily into a cloud of assurances of love and fidelity. Lord Shrewsbury and Lord Churchill, he

¹ Author's insertion, as the transports have nothing to do with the Brest plan, but with the return of James.

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declared, "should be judges of his actions," and, says Floyd, "I could not draw anything more positive from him."

Floyd next waited upon Godolphin, who "explained to me his sentiments towards your Majesty in the most affectionate manner imaginable." After mentioning that there was "too much room to fear a peace would be concluded this summer and that the terms would be prejudicial to your Majesty since infallibly the Prince would endeavour thereby to pledge the Most Christian king to send your Majesty out of his dominions," Godolphin, according to Floyd's report, repeated to him almost the actual words which Floyd had used to Russell. The resemblance can be judged from the italicized portions of the two statements. Godolphin is reported to have said that

Russell would infallibly appear before Brest, the land officers believing that the place may be insulted though the sea officers were of a different opinion; that these would give just pretext to His Most Christian Majesty to send troops to that place, and that the necessary transports might be prepared this summer [for the return of James¹]; that the large vessels would return about the middle of autumn; that the smaller would be dispersed, the convoys sent to different places of commerce, and that England would have a difficulty in finding thirty vessels of tolerable force and that Your Majesty embracing the proper time might come over. . . .

The similarity of the passages, the order in which the different matters are dealt with, the coupling in a single sentence of the totally different projects of the attack on Brest and of getting transports for James's return late in the year, the repetition of the word 'infallibly,' apparently a favourite one with Floyd, have suggested to various commentators that the Floyd Report is a concoction; "that it was quietly composed at Saint-Germains by Melfort and Floyd in concert, and was transmitted to Versailles as the latest *bona fide* account of English politics."² But it is not necessary to assume this in order to clear Godolphin from the shameful charge which has so long rested upon him. We may accept the fact that Floyd had conversations with all those he mentions in his

¹ Author's insertion.

² This is Colonel Pamell's view.

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report; and that he recorded faithfully the impressions these conversations had left in his mind. We may even accept his account of his interview with Godolphin as accurate, without impugning the Minister's loyalty to his country, to the King he served, or to the Government of which he was a leading member. Odd as it may seem, Ministers and military leaders engaged in common enterprises, bound by a common duty, having much to gain by its successful discharge and all to lose by failure or misconduct, often consult together and talk things over in all the intimacy of a small circle of Cabinet confederates. In fact, this close and constant contact, of which there is rarely any record, is often the main part of what happens. It is obvious from Floyd's text that these four men, three of whom were in the highest executive positions and the fourth, Churchill, though out of office and out of favour, linked to them by the most confidential or friendly ties, pursued a common policy towards the envoy of their exiled king. According to Floyd's tale, they all took much the same line and said the same sort of things about each other. For instance, Russell said "Shrewsbury and Churchill should be judges of his actions." When pressed by Floyd for more definite undertakings he replied that "he thought he had said a great deal." These phrases are repeated by Floyd in his account of his interviews with Churchill and Major-General Sackville, one of the principal agent-spies. They were "all of the opinion that he had said a great deal." Godolphin, on the same authority, endorsed this. Russell, he said, "in his opinion had said all that could be expected of him."

Even more remarkable is the fact that Godolphin repeated back almost textually to Floyd the statements which Floyd had volunteered to Russell. These resemblances cannot be set down to coincidence. A simpler explanation suggests itself. It is reasonable to suppose that before Godolphin received Floyd, Russell had told him what Floyd knew, and Godolphin knew exactly how far he could go without injuring the interests of the State. It is evident that the Ministers consulted upon the matter with each other. It is even possible



THE EARL OF GODOLPHIN
By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

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that they imparted a portion of their conversations to King William.

Certainly William's attitude after the fiasco and tragedy of Brest was, as will be seen, compatible with this view. After all, events still lay within the control of the English executive. They knew that their plan was known. They knew it before Floyd had visited Russell. If one port was prepared, others might be neglected. Alarm and even advertisement were definite elements in all this coastal threat. Alternately their very candour if reported in France might disarm French suspicion at this particular point. At any moment William could stop the fleet sailing or send it to a different destination.¹ These men were not simpletons. On the contrary, they were statesmen who with small resources, in the teeth of unusual difficulties, solved some of the most perplexing problems of peace and war, and carried their country successfully through a period of enormous peril. The final decision to send the fleet was clearly taken with full knowledge that the French had heard that it was going to Brest, and might be ready for it there.

The eighth of the Nairne Papers is the foundation for the charge against Marlborough. It purports to be the translation into French of a letter from Major-General Sackville forwarding a letter from Marlborough to King James. We print it in facsimile.² The English retranslation is as follows:

¹ The following imaginary conversation is probably more true to life and reality than the monstrous assumptions which historians have adopted:

GODOLPHIN. Floyd has been to see us again, sire.

KING WILLIAM. Did you get anything out of him?

GODOLPHIN. They know all about our Brest plan. He told the whole story to the Admiral.

KING WILLIAM. I don't mind that so much if it draws troops from Flanders. But how did you deal with him?

GODOLPHIN. We left him where he was. In fact, I served him back exactly what he had told Russell.

KING WILLIAM. It may deceive them: but we shall have to be careful, when the time comes, to go somewhere else if we find them ready at Brest. There is no need to make up our minds yet. The fleet is still fitting out. The dockyards are full of spies, but it rests with us where it shall go. By the way, my lord, how does exile suit the charming Queen?

GODOLPHIN (*bowing*). Sire, I am sending her some sweetmeats.

² Facing p. 436.

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3rd May, 1694. I have just received the enclosed letter for the King. It is from Lord Churchill; but no person but the Queen and you must know from whom it comes. Therefore, for the love of God, let it be kept a close secret, even from Lord Middleton. I send it by an express, judging it to be of the utmost consequence for the service of the King, my master; and consequently for the service of His Most Christian Majesty. You see by the contents of this letter that I am not deceived in the judgment I formed of Admiral Russell; for that man has not acted with good faith, and I fear he never will act otherwise.

Translation of Lord Churchill's letter of the same date to the King of England

It is only to-day that I have just learned the news I now write to you; which is, that the bomb-ketches and the twelve regiments encamped at Portsmouth, with the two regiments of marines, all commanded by Talmash,¹ are destined for burning the port of Brest, and destroying all the men-of-war that are there. This will be a great advantage to England. But no consideration can prevent, or ever shall prevent me from informing you of all that I believe can be for your service. Therefore you may make your own use of this intelligence, which you may rely upon as exactly true. But I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know it but the Queen and the bearer of this letter. Russell will set sail to-morrow with forty ships, the rest being not yet paid; but it is said that in ten days the rest of the fleet will follow; and at the same time, the land forces. I attempted to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell. But he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions. I shall be very well pleased to learn that this letter has come safely to your hands.

Here is the damning piece. It is upon this document that the pinnacle of Macaulay's libels upon Marlborough has been erected. Macaulay assumes its authenticity with unquestioning glee, and proceeds to use it in the most sensational and malicious manner. He suppresses all the other channels by which information had reached the French King,

¹ The Tollemache already mentioned.

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though these were, of course, known to him. He suppresses all the previous preparations made by the French. By Marlborough, and Marlborough alone, was the secret betrayed. Upon his information, and upon that alone, were the French precautions begun. Upon his head alone descends the guilt and infamy of the disaster which followed. Besides his habitual treason to King William and to his country, the arch-villain had in this case a special private incentive to treachery.

Yet never had Marlborough been less a Jacobite than at the moment when he rendered this wicked and shameful service to the Jacobite cause. It may be confidently affirmed that to serve the banished family was not his object, and that to ingratiate himself with the banished family was only his secondary object. His primary object was to force himself into the service of the existing Government, and to gain possession of those important and lucrative places from which he had been dismissed more than two years before. He knew that the country and Parliament would not patiently bear to see the English army commanded by foreign generals. Two Englishmen only had shown themselves fit for high military posts, himself and Talmash. If Talmash were defeated and disgraced, William would scarcely have a choice. In fact, as soon as it was known that the expedition had failed, and that Talmash was no more, the general cry was that the King ought to receive into his favour the accomplished captain who had done such good service at Walcourt, at Cork, and at Kinsale.¹

Marlborough's defenders and apologists have been concerned to expose the many untruths in Macaulay's account and to throw the blame on others. "Modern criticism," it has been said,² "has passed by the meanness of Godolphin to assail the glory of Marlborough." The charge that Marlborough's main incentive was to compass the ruin or the death of Tollemache and thus make himself indispensable assumes that Marlborough could know occultly beforehand that Tollemache would attack in spite of finding the place prepared, that he would land himself at the head of his troops, and that he would fail or be killed or mortally wounded.

¹ *History*, iv, 514.

² *Cambridge Modern History*, v, 461.

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Paget, Wolseley, and Colonel Lloyd¹ have occupied themselves in proving that Marlborough's letter was not the means by which the French learned the news; that their preparations had begun at least a month before; that Marlborough knew from Godolphin that the French were aware of the plan; that he only sought to ingratiate himself with James II by revealing what was already known; and that he delayed sending the news until he was sure it would arrive too late to influence events. This view has been generally accepted by later writers and commentators.²

But this defence, though valid against Macaulay's libels and embroideries, involves the admission of Marlborough's shame in intention, if not in act. His alleged letter contains precise details. Although the fleet sailed the next day but one, it might have been delayed, and was in fact seriously delayed, and more than a month elapsed before the attack was made. Although the letter did not influence events, it might have done so. If it were ever written it must leave upon the character of John Churchill an ineffaceable and fatal stain. Standards of conduct and morals—public or private—change with the ages, and men are largely the creatures of their environment. Custom and convention play their parts. Desperate need issues its imperious commands. Dark deeds sow their crop of dragon's teeth. Many allowances should be made where a different "climate of opinion" prevails. But in every age the loyalty of a general to his comrades in the army, to the troops he has led and may lead again, is an inflexible obligation. Soldierly honour was as well understood under Queen Anne as under Queen Victoria. Marlborough was a soldier born and bred. He had served from a youth in rank after rank at home and abroad, in peace and war. He was a trained professional, instinct with the spirit of camps and regiments. His courage and humanity have never been assailed. Even his bitterest

¹ "Marlborough and the Brest Expedition," in *The English Historical Review*, 1894.

² A notable exception is Professor Basil Williams, who in his *Stanhope* (1932), apparently oblivious of forty years of accepted opinion and research, inertly or docilely reproduces the crude, exploded slander that "the gallant General Talmash" fell "as victim to Marlborough's treachery in the ill-fated Brest expedition" (p. 15).

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detractors acclaim them. His care for the lives of his troops was indefatigable even to his last campaign. At sixty-two—Duke, Prince, Generalissimo, and millionaire—he would tramp the trenches and lines and go in person to any dangerous point of attack in order to make sure with his own eyes that men were not thrown away, or set tasks impossible to perform. He was ever proud to share their perils and avaricious of their love and trust.

Is it possible that a single human being could combine the finest military virtues, the strictest sense of military duty, with the vilest military crimes? Could he—and for a purpose almost paltry and gains uncertain and mediocre—foully betray his comrades by hundreds to their death? Such strange contrarieties may writhe together in the brain of a maniac or a monster. They are not easily to be reconciled in a single sane, well-balanced being. Moreover, the political facts of 1693–94 make it improbable in the last degree that Marlborough would have desired to act against the reigning dynasty in England. All his closest friends were in power or gradually returning to it. In August 1693 he had taken part in a secret conference at Althorp at which Sunderland, Shrewsbury, and other leaders of the future Whig Junto were present. He had already attempted to bring about a reconciliation between the Queen and Princess Anne, and to effect at this very time a formal meeting of the two sisters. Lastly, with Shrewsbury and Godolphin he was a large subscriber to the Bank of England, thus engaging his dearly loved “lucre” in support of the new régime.¹ Military honour, political associations, financial interest—all alike forbade the outrage and folly of which he is accused. Before accepting such unreasonable conclusions, let us examine the letter with attention.

We had always supposed, from reading both the assailants and the defenders of Marlborough, that the original of this letter existed, and that either the archives of the house of Stuart or the Carte Collection at the Bodleian contained the infamous

¹ Feiling, pp. 295–296, 306. According to L’Hermitage (Add. MSS., 17677 O.O., f. 279 *verso*), Marlborough and Shrewsbury subscribed £10,000 each and Godolphin £7000.

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document, written in Marlborough's characteristic painstaking handwriting. Dalrymple, however, says:

The originals of the two last letters [Sackville's and Marlborough's] are not in existence in the Scots College at Paris where the other two papers are, but copies were found among the other official papers of Nairne, Under Secretary of State to Lord Melfort, and one of them has an interlineation in Lord Melfort's handwriting. In King James's Memoirs I have seen a memorandum in his own handwriting that Lord Churchill had on the 4th May given him information of the design upon Brest. I was told by Principal Gordon of the Scots College at Paris that during the hostilities between the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Oxford near the end of the Queen's reign, Lord Oxford who had got intelligence of the Duke's letter and pretended at that time to be in the interests of the exiled family, applied for and got an order for the original; and that his making the Duke know that his life was in his hands, was the cause of the Duke's going into a voluntary exile at Brussels in the year 1712; and indeed so extraordinary a step as that exile must have had an extraordinary cause. It is known too from the history of the times that there was a private meeting between the Duke and Lord Oxford at Mr Thomas Harley's house to which the Duke came by the back door, immediately after which he left England. I have also heard from the late Archbishop of York, grandson to the Earl of Oxford, that he had been informed that the Duchess of Marlborough after the death of these two persons, had contrived to get the letter from Lord Oxford's papers and destroyed it.¹

Thus we see how the very fact that no original of this letter is in existence can be made to blacken the guilt of the man who is accused of writing it. If the proof exists, he is guilty of treason; as it does not exist, he or his wife must be guilty of destroying it. Thus Dalrymple, whose tale had a good run for several generations.

A different though similar story occurs in Shelburne's autobiography printed in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*:²

When Lord Oxford was sent to the Tower, the Duke of Berwick, who had owed him some obligations, sent to know whether he could do anything to serve him, and in the mean-

¹ iii, Part III, 65-66.

² i, 22.

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time sent him an original letter from the Duke of Marlborough to the Pretender for him to make any use of he thought proper. Lord Oxford asked his counsel, Sergeant Cummins, whether it could be of any: he said "A great deal; I would advise your Lordship to send your son, Lord Harley, with it to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, but as I have known such things sometimes snatched and torn up, I would keep the original and send only an exact copy." Lord Harley waited accordingly on the Duke of Marlborough, saying that he waited on his Grace by his father's directions with it, and nothing more. The Duke read it attentively, and said: "My Lord, this is not my hand." Lord Harley said, "My father has the original": upon which civil bows passed without a word more, but the prosecution in a few weeks after was dropped.

A contradictory variant of this story is found in Seward.¹

Here we have, therefore, the same tale of some deadly letter by which the Duke of Marlborough, after all his glories, the greatest living figure in the world, was liable to be blackmailed. In the first instance we are told by Dalrymple that the fear of this letter held over him by Lord Oxford induced him to retreat to Brussels in 1712. In the second instance, in 1715, it is Lord Oxford's son who is sent to threaten, as the result of which his father's prosecution is dropped. Obviously if in 1712 Oxford, then Prime Minister, had possessed the damning document the authenticity of which Marlborough had immediately recognized and in dread of which he had quitted the country forthwith, it would not have been necessary for Oxford in 1715, still possessed of the document, to send a copy of it by his son. Marlborough would have been aware in 1715 of the hold which Oxford had established over him in 1712. Therefore we must conclude that this is the same scandalous narrative by two different writers, each agreeing in malice and libel, but completely at variance in time and circumstance.

¹ "During the preparations for the trial of Harley Earl of Oxford, a relation of his went to the Duchess of Marlborough, with a copy of a letter which the Duke had written to the Pretender. She taking the letter from him, and reading it, tore it to pieces. He then shewed her the original. The trial soon after was stopped, on a supposed misunderstanding between the Houses of Lords and Commons." (Seward, *Anecdotes*, p. 268.)

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The Shelburne and Seward versions can be proved false in various essentials with the greatest ease. We are told :

Lord Oxford came to a full resolution to petition the House of Lords in March [1716] to be tried, in which he principally advised with Lord Trevor. As soon as this was known the Duke of Marlborough talked of nothing but a Bill of Attainder or a Bill of Banishment.¹

In May 1716 after the Whigs had been in some measure satiated with the blood of the Preston prisoners, the Duke of Marlborough began to solicit and to forward as much as in him lay a Bill of Attainder against the Earl of Oxford. Mr Walpole and Lord Townsend assumed to themselves the merit of opposing it and by that stopping it. The Duke was in a great rage and anger upon their not complying with him, and went out of town to St Albans, whereupon he was struck with that illness which he never recovered, it was a great while before he recovered his speech, his senses he never fully recovered.²

This is a good example of the fertility of the calumnies against Marlborough. The reader may choose between the spectacle of his being blackmailed into tame inactivity by the threatened exposure, and persisting so violently in his quest for vengeance that his passions brought on an apoplectic stroke. Any tale is good enough to smirch his character. But if this latter unpleasant account is accepted, it flatly contradicts the story of the Shelburne memoirs. The two charges are mutually destructive. As a matter of fact, neither version is true. The reasons why the prosecution of Lord Oxford was dropped are undisputed history. All the facts of the quarrel between the two Houses of Parliament which resulted first in a prolonged deadlock and conflict between them and thereafter in the acquittal of Oxford by the Lords are set forth plainly in every standard work upon the period. Marlborough after 1715 was already fast declining in mental and physical strength. Although restored to the office of Captain-General, he was no longer in the inner circle. He had neither the power nor means to influence the intricate and varying course of the

¹ Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, v, 667-668.

² Stowe MSS., 825, f. 120.

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dispute between the two Houses. At that date the publication of such a letter would not have menaced him in property, liberty, or life. Twenty years had passed, and his fidelity to the Protestant cause and to the Revolution of 1688 had been written with the sword upon the battlefields of Europe.

The whole of this story is a tissue of fraud and lies, of gossip and calumny, such as gather around the footsteps of the great, the powerful, and the envied. Few are the public men in any modern state who have reached exceptional eminence without there being passed from foul lips to pricked-up ears some tale of shamefulness. "This one was corrupt"; or "that one was immoral"; or "the other perverted." In the clubs, messes, and pothouses of every country such atrocious stories are the inseparable shadow of worldly success. Historians come along and in default of better material pick up this scandalous chatter, that "so and so heard from Mr Nonsuch that his grandfather had told the Bishop of Q. that his wife once had a letter which if it had not unhappily been mislaid, or destroyed, purloined, or corruptly purchased, would have, etc., etc., etc."

However, it is certain that no such letter in Marlborough's handwriting ever reached Saint-Germains. All that exists or has ever existed is the document shown in facsimile opposite p. 436. It is headed as follows: "Translation [*i.e.*, recasting in French] of a letter *in cipher* from Mr Sackfield [Sackville], Mareshal des Camps of His Britannic Majesty, to the Earl of Milford [Melfort]."

The paper is in the handwriting of Nairne. It has not been folded for transmission. It is the translation into French of the decode of an alleged cipher message in English which had been conveyed from Sackville to France, probably in a tiny roll concealed in hat, boot, vesture, or even perhaps in the wad of a pistol. How then, is it suggested, was this communication, if it ever existed, prepared? It seems unlikely that so profound and crafty a conspirator as Marlborough is depicted to be, a man steeped in treachery, his head at stake, or a master of strategy and manœuvre, as we know he was, would, when easier and safer alternatives were

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open, write such a letter to Sackville, send it by ordinary messenger, and leave it in his hands. It was the sort of letter any man would have been careful about; quite ordinary criminals would be more circumspect.

So we must suppose that the two men were together in England when the deed, if done at all, was done; that they composed both letters in concert, that Sackville, who had the cipher, encoded them, and that all traces of the original draft were carefully destroyed on the night of May 3, 1694. Upon this common-sense assumption there would have been no need for Marlborough to leave the destruction of this letter to the belated exertions of his Duchess half a century later. We must therefore conclude that there never was any holograph letter of Marlborough's of this kind in existence; or, at the very least, that there never was a moment when such a document was in the power or possession of any other human being.

If this is settled we have taken a considerable step forward in clarifying this matter. The evidence against Marlborough rests upon a lengthy chain, every link of which was admittedly forged by his Jacobite enemies. Sackville, Melfort, Nairne, Dicconson, all, according to the historians, had his life and honour in their hands at their leisure and discretion. Whatever they chose to write they could leave behind them, and as nothing else has survived, that has become decisive for the historians. But unluckily they had no letter from Marlborough. They had to do all the pen-work themselves. Dalrymple, Macpherson,¹ Macaulay have built their fabric of accusation upon the foundation of this letter; but it does not exist; it has never existed. All that exists is a document in Nairne's handwriting purporting to be the copy of a message in cipher from Sackville to Melfort in which Sackville reports the text of a letter or possibly of a verbal message, which he alleges he received from Marlborough. Such evidence would not hang a dog.

But it is said there is a second witness. It is James himself. Macpherson says, "In King James's Memoirs there is the following memorandum written *upon the receipt* of the letter

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in his own hand, ' May 4 Lord Churchill informed the King of the design on Brest.' ” (Macpherson even gives the page—521.) Macpherson says he saw this in the Memoirs which Mr Fox was told in 1802 were never shown him. Dalrymple, however, in the passage already quoted offers partial confirmation. “ In King James’s Memoirs I have seen a memorandum in his own handwriting that Lord Churchill had on 4th May given him information of the design upon Brest.”

Now King James’s Memoirs stopped in 1660, and Dicconson did not begin the *Life* till several years after King James’s death in 1702. There were no memoirs covering the period of William’s reign, and there was no *Life* of James at all in existence upon which in 1694 or at any other time James could have written the alleged accusation, or anything else. What, then, did Macpherson and Dalrymple see? No doubt they saw Dicconson’s *Life*, written perhaps fifteen years later, into the text of which a note purporting to be by James, and in an imitation of his handwriting, had been interpolated after his death by some Jacobite-Jesuit scribe for the sake of fortifying the charges against the Duke of Marlborough. What they saw was, in fact, what Macaulay has called “ one of the thousand fictions invented at Saint-Germains for the purpose of blackening a character which was black enough without such daubing.” They may also have looked at the “ 3 vols. in 4° ” of the Memoirs, fair-copied and bound up by Louis Inesse from Dryden’s transcript of the year 1686 of James’s original Memoirs, “ almost illegible,” which had “ puzzled Mr Carte,” and not have noticed, or been given the opportunity to notice, that these carried the story no further than 1660. However it may be, it is clear that they were deceived, or deceived themselves, into proclaiming an untruth which has helped to mislead the writers of five or six generations, and has served as a whetstone for the weapons of calumny.

After this exposure it is scarcely necessary to pursue the point further. But since it illustrates the nature of all frauds to fall to pieces of themselves, the reader should note the difference in the respective statements of Macpherson and

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Dalrymple. Macpherson in his eagerness to traduce Marlborough says that James's memorandum was written "upon the receipt of the letter," whereas the more cautious Dalrymple only says that "Churchill had on the 4th May given him information," etc., without specifying when the entry was made. The Camaret Bay Letter could not, of course, have been received by James on May 4. Sackville dated it "the 3rd May." This is certainly the Old Style dating, because Marlborough's alleged letter says, "Russell sails to-morrow," and we know that the fleet did in fact sail on the 5th (Old Style), the day after that to-morrow. Of course, it would have been impossible in those days for any missive sent from London on May 3 by other than State couriers to have reached Saint-Germains before the 7th or 8th, and even by them it could not have been delivered before the 6th. This would assume the couriers on both sides and the ship running in connexion, and favourable weather. The 8th of May (Old Style) is the 18th of May (New Style). James, Nairne, Dicconson, and the rest during their residence at Saint-Germains invariably used the New Style in vogue in France. There could, therefore, be no question of James having made this entry in Dicconson's *Life*, even if it had been written, or on any other document, *upon receipt* of the letter. If James ever made such an entry it must have been upon some other occasion. Of this there is no evidence or suggestion of evidence. And in any case the entry would be wrong. May 4 was neither the date on which the letter was said to have been written nor that on which it could possibly have been received.

On the basis, therefore, (a) that no original of the Camaret Bay Letter exists and (b) that the charge against Marlborough rests solely upon Sackville decoded by Melfort, transcribed by Nairne, let us address ourselves to the text of the letter itself.

The first point to notice is the interlineation after the third line that the letter must be kept a secret "*even from Lord Middleton [meme du Comte de Middleton].*" This is not in Nairne's handwriting, but in that of Melfort. The fact is significant. This was above all others the moment when it was vital for Lord Melfort to prove himself invaluable and

flottes de guerre qui y sont. Ceci sera un
à l'Angleterre. Mais aucune considération ne
ne m'empêchera jamais de vous informer de
pouvoir être pour votre service. Ainsi vous
age de cet avis, et compter qu'il est très
faux que je vous conjure pour votre propre
n'en sache rien que La Reine, et celui qui

est demain à la voile avec 40 vaisseaux, le
core payé. Mais on dit que dans dix jours
suivra et en même temps les troupes de terre
savoir ceci, il y a quelque temps de l'Amiral
me l'a toujours dénié quoique je fais très
dit ce dessein il y a plus de six semaines, —
méchant augure des intentions de cet homme là
de savoir que cette lettre vous soit venue
, mais.

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indispensable. A schism had arisen in the Jacobite councils. They were divided into "Compounders" and "Non-compounders"; the former being willing to subscribe to the requirements of Protestant and constitutional government in the event of a restoration, the latter holding firmly to the extreme Catholic view. The Protestant Lord Middleton represented and was the head of the Compounders; Melfort of the Non-compounders. For more than a year Melfort's credit with James had been waning. Middleton had arrived at Saint-Germains in the autumn of 1693 as joint Secretary of State with Melfort. His appointment as sole Secretary of State in place of Melfort was now imminent. Melfort was politically *in extremis*. At the beginning of this same month of May, and within three days of the date when he claims to have received the Camaret Bay Letter, he was dismissed from his office and appointed to the much humbler post of Secretary to the Queen. Mary of Modena, always a devout and fanatical Catholic, was since her exile immersed in politics and a centre of Jacobite intrigue. In fact, she seems to have concerned herself with secret service matters more closely than did her husband. Melfort felt his dismissal acutely. His justification of his Ministerial conduct written on May 7/17—this same May—shows his state of mind. He had long lived at the centre of a spider's web of secret service and conspiracy. To be divorced from this was a bitter pang. That he should be supplanted by the head of the Protestant Jacobites was an additional twinge to him and a sorrow to the Queen, who in his distress had offered him shelter.

The gravest reasons of policy had induced James to part with Melfort, to whom he was attached, and to install the Protestant Secretary of State in his stead. These reasons are obvious to us to-day. No restoration was possible except through the support of the Protestant Jacobites of England. Middleton, a man of high integrity, commanded the respect and confidence of a very large number of Whigs and Anti-Catholic Tories. Had a restoration taken place it was to him that all the Protestants who loathed Dutch William and the leaders of the Revolution, whether in or out of King

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William's councils, looked as guarantee that the follies which James had committed in his short reign would not be renewed, should he regain the crown. It was with Middleton that the English Ministers had such relations as existed. So Melfort must go, and zeal for Rome, even in the Queen's despite, must yield for a time at least to practical politics. The bitter feelings with which Melfort viewed his rival and supplanter were cordially reciprocated, for on October 3 this same year we find Middleton writing to another Compounder, "I wish [hope] Lord Melfort does not come to spit in our potage, for if the Ministers believe that he will be acquainted with what has been proposed, we need think no more about it."¹

Why, may we ask, should Marlborough be so anxious to correspond only with Melfort, and not with Middleton? In so far as he involved himself with the Jacobites he is always represented by them as a Compounder. Indeed, it was to his advice that James's biographer Dicconson attributes James's Declaration in favour of maintaining the rights of Parliament and the interests of the Church of England. Why, then, should he in this—the only document which pretends to be even a copy of a letter—in this, the most deadly of all documents, stipulate that it should not be shown to Lord Middleton, the head of the Compounders? No answer admissible to the human intellect can be given. On all Jacobite showing Middleton was his link, and Middleton was coming into power. Melfort was not his link, was, in fact, the chief opponent of what is alleged to be his view; and Melfort was going out of power. Why indeed should he have tied himself to Melfort on this occasion only, on this occasion above all others? On the other hand, the reasons why Melfort should pretend he had done so are obvious.

The fact that Melfort tampered with the letter for the purpose of enhancing his own importance at the expense of Middleton stands forth beyond dispute. It is fair to ask, was this the only tampering? Curiously enough, seven years later, as we shall see, Melfort got into trouble for a treacherous trick with another letter. Later, in 1708, Marlborough is

¹ Macpherson, i, 497.

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said to have been informed by one of Melfort's household of the proposed French operations in Scotland. Saint-Simon, who knew Melfort well, always suspected him of playing fast and loose. Such was the man under whose supervision Nairne wrote the Camaret Bay Letter.

The next mark of fabrication is the cross-heading "Translation of Lord Churchill's letter of the same date *to the King of England*."¹ Obviously Marlborough would not have used this unceremonious style to the King. He would never have addressed the King as "you," or written "you may make your own use of this intelligence," or "I must conjure you for your own interest." Sackville, writing only to a Secretary of State on this very occasion and in the same urgency, observed all the forms and laboriously ciphered out "the service of the King, my master" and "the service of His Most Christian Majesty." Why, then, should Marlborough write to the King as to an equal?

And what sense can there be in Marlborough's reference to "the bearer of this letter"? Only the Queen and "the bearer" are to know. The King is conjured ("for his own interest") to observe this injunction. Who was the bearer? The context forbids that it could be Sackville, for he writes his own separate and introductory letter. Who then—a messenger? But the message was in cipher. Was it, then, Melfort himself? But how could Marlborough, writing in England, know that it would be Melfort who would be "the bearer"; and why should he refer to the Secretary of State by this peculiar term? No rational explanation exists.

If the reader will finally look back to the Sackville-Churchill letters,² he will be struck by their strange harmony both in sense and in its contradiction. Says Sackville, "No person *but the Queen* and you must know from whom it comes. Therefore, for the love of God, let it be kept a close secret. . . ." Says Churchill, "But I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know *it-but the Queen* and the bearer of this letter." Says Sackville of Admiral Russell, "That man *has not acted with good faith, and I*

¹ Author's italics.

² P. 426.

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fear he never will act otherwise." Says Churchill, "I attempted to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell. But he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. *This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions.*" And, again, Sackville, inconsistently disregarding the secrecy which he had just enjoined, says, "I send it by an express, judging it to be of the utmost consequence for the service of the King, my master; and consequently *for the service of His Most Christian Majesty.*" Says Churchill, with similar inconsequence, "Therefore *you may make your own use* of this intelligence, which you may rely upon as exactly true." Thus they marched both in step and out of step together.

It is difficult to believe that these two letters were written independently. Whether we adopt the theory that Churchill and Sackville composed them together in London or that Nairne and Melfort concocted them together in Paris, evidence favours their simultaneous birth. But on which side of the Channel did this take place? There was certainly no reason why it should not have been at Saint-Germains. Melfort had known of the Brest plan for weeks. His agent Floyd on his visit to England volunteered the information to Admiral Russell. Floyd's report of his interviews with Russell and Godolphin was already in Melfort's possession. It is probable that he also knew the measures which the French had taken to strengthen and reinforce the place. The details which Churchill is said to have supplied were such as might easily have been obtained by an ordinary spy. A stroll through the camps on Portsdown Hills or through Portsmouth Dockyard would have revealed to any competent agent in the early days of May the embarkation of the troops and the impending departure of the fleet. The French War Office had known the exact numbers of the expeditionary force—seven thousand—since April. Such a report may well have reached Saint-Germains. The destination of the fleet was the only secret, and that had long ago already been penetrated, betrayed, or divulged; but could at any time be changed. There is therefore nothing in this letter which could not have been set down by Nairne and Melfort and

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presented by them to Mary of Modena, James, and Louis. What was needed was not information but authority, something that would associate this information with an eminent Englishman, something that would carry it safely to the highest quarters, rivet the attention of Ministers and sovereigns, and show to all how vigilant and irreplaceable were Melfort and Nairne, and how exclusive were the connexions they had established across the Channel.

We cannot convict Nairne and Melfort of inventing and fabricating the Camaret Bay Letter. We cannot expose them as the Privy Council exposed Young and his confederate Blackhead, with their equally elaborate and circumstantial charge. We cannot rank them with the celebrated political forgers of our own time—with Esterhazy of the Dreyfus Case, with Piggott of the Parnell Commission. All we know is that they were capable of such conduct. Men who do not stop at murder for a cause will not stop at forgery. Melfort had every opportunity and all the necessary materials; he had an urgent interest at this moment in presenting something sensational to improve his own position with the French Government at the expense of Middleton, and to strengthen himself with the Queen. With this end in view he certainly fastened on Sackville with wrongful intent at least one phrase which we know that Sackville never wrote.

Here, then, is the evidence and here is the witness, the sole witness upon which this frightful charge against John, Duke of Marlborough, has been founded. In groping among these shadows of the past and stirring the dust of long-dead generations, we can do no more than reveal discrepancies and untruths, and contrast and balance probabilities. Even after exposing the tissue of falsehood in the accusation, we cannot prove a negative for the defence. But if history hesitates to frame an indictment against Melfort and Nairne or any of the cluster of exiled Jacobites and priests who formed the phantom Court of Saint-Germains, justice forbids her to pronounce on no evidence but theirs a sentence of eternal infamy upon the first of English soldiers and a chief architect of Britain's Imperial power.

CHAPTER XXVI
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(1694)

IT remains to recount what befell the Brest expedition. According to Dalrymple, King William

intended that the attempt should have been made in the spring, but Admiral Russell, by private orders from King James, having accepted the command of the fleet, which had been taken from him the year before, and King James having given private instructions, through the hands of the Countess of Shrewsbury, to him, the Duke of Leeds [Danby], the Lords Shrewsbury, Godolphin and Marlborough, and others, to create delays in the fitting out of the fleet ; ¹ Lord Berkley, who commanded it, was not ready to sail till the first week of June.

This outrageous charge does not affect Marlborough, who, having no official employment of any kind, had no power to delay the sailing of the fleet. It is, however, flagrant against Admiral Russell, whose patriotism and inherent loyalty to the Protestant succession had been proved at Cape La Hogue, and were now about to be proved again in the Mediterranean, to which he was proceeding, in pursuit of Tourville, with the English main fleet. Before sailing the Admiral wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Trenchard, a letter which shows his care for the public interests, and ill consorts with the libel that he had been betraying them under the orders of James II :

Now we are going, give me leave to offer to you my opinion. I shall not speak upon the business of the Straits ; in that I assure you what service I am able to perform there, I will not be wanting. But those ships designed to Brest with the landmen, how successful they may be nobody can make a judgment ; but 'tis to be feared that since the delay has been so much greater than could

¹ See a copy of these instructions in Macpherson's *Original Papers*, i, 456.

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be expected or imagined, it has given the enemy time, upon the alarm, to make preparations to oppose them. Therefore may it not be convenient that the General [Tollemache] should not be tied up too strictly by his orders, that in case he has the good fortune to do service there, he may also have liberty, if approved of by a council of war of general officers, both of land and sea, to attempt any other place that by good information they may hope for success upon? Or, in case the opposition they meet with at Brest be so great that they can hope for little success, why may they not run to Port Louis, where I am told it is feasible to destroy, if not their ships, their magazines of stores? ¹

This warning by the Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty emphasized the Queen's instructions to Tollemache of May 11, which were in the most general terms.

. . . And when you shall come to the Rendezvous appointed, or shall otherwise join the Admiral of our Fleet, you are to advise with our said Admiral, how our said Forces may best be employed for our service, and for annoying the Enemy; and what shall be agreed upon between You and Our said Admiral; or in his absence between You and the Commander in Chief of such ships as our said Admiral shall send with You, You are to put in execution accordingly.²

In the first week of June Russell sailed with the whole fleet for the Mediterranean. He dropped Berkeley, with a squadron of transports containing seven thousand men, off Brest. On June 7 this squadron stood into Camaret Bay. The heavy fire of mortars from the shore batteries showed at once that the place was in the fullest state of defence and preparedness. At the council of war Lord Cutts, already an officer of proved daring, afterwards Marlborough's famous "Salamander," urged caution. He volunteered himself to go ashore with fifty grenadiers and test the severity of the fire. But Tollemache seemed strangely set upon the attempt. He recognized the danger; "the die, however," he said, "is cast; we cannot in honour retreat." Such a mood was, having regard to his orders, as unreasonable as stout-hearted. The Admirals would not be cold when the General was thus ardent. Accordingly

¹ Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 71.

² *S.P. (Dom.)*, Admiralty Entry Book, 205.

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the next morning, June 8, the squadron engaged the forts and batteries at close quarters, and Tollemache, at the head of fifteen hundred infantry, landed from boats on the sandy shore in the teeth of heavy and increasing firing. They were forthwith, while in the confusion of landing, attacked by superior numbers of French infantry, and charged by cavalry and driven back on their boats. Tollemache was wounded in the thigh. By a singular error the landing had been made upon an ebb-tide. Few of the heavy boats could be got afloat. The majority of those who had landed were killed or captured. The wounded General was carried aboard his ship, and the squadron, which had suffered severely in its duel with the forts and batteries, withdrew out of range. So serious had been the losses, amounting to nearly two thousand men, that all plans for attacking other points upon the coast were abandoned, and the expedition sailed back to Portsmouth, which was reached on the 12th. On the melancholy homeward voyage further councils of war were held. Tollemache, whose wound had become grievously inflamed, attended, and is said to have declared "that Brest was the only place he had authority to attack." He died a few days later of what was no doubt blood-poisoning from an injury with which modern war-surgery could probably easily have coped. In his last hours this brave officer mingled with expressions of his contentment to die for his country the reproach that he had been betrayed by his fellow-countrymen.

From the earliest moment a fast ship had borne the news of the repulse to England, and the Secretary of the Admiralty wrote to Lord Berkeley from Whitehall, June 13, 1694:

I have your Lordships of the 9th instant from Camaret Bay, which I have laid before the Queen who commands me to signify to you, that she did not intend by her Order to restrain [restrict] the Lieutenant-General Tollemache to the attempting any one particular place on the Coast of France, as you will see by the enclosed Copy of the Order, and of my letter to Lieutenant General Tollemache of the 29th past, which letter I sent under cover of Colonel Gibson. . . . Her Majesty thereupon thinks fit that Your Lordship and the flag and general officers should

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consider further attacks on the French coast sending the result of the council of war to be laid before Her Majesty for her further pleasure.¹

That the orders for the attack upon Brest were discretionary and depended upon the decisions of a council of senior officers in view of what they found on the spot, and that the English Government knew that the enemy had had ample warning, are all proved by William's intimate correspondence with the Duke of Shrewsbury, his principal Secretary of State. "I own to you," wrote the King from Flanders on June 18/28,

that I did not suppose they would have made the attempt without having well reconnoitred the situation of the enemy to receive them ; since they [the enemy] were well apprised of our intended attack, and made active preparations for defence ; for what was practicable two months ago, was no longer so at present.²

And on June 21/July 1 :

I am affected with the loss of poor Tollemache, for although I do not approve of his conduct, yet I am of opinion that his too ardent zeal to distinguish himself, induced him to attempt what was impracticable.

To the first of these letters Shrewsbury replied on June 22 :

I never was so entirely satisfied with the design upon Brest as to be much surprised at its miscarrying, especially since the enemy had so much warning to prepare for their defence. But I always concluded it was not to be attempted in case their preparations had made it so impracticable as it is related now to appear to those who viewed it from the ships, but that they had full power to try what could be done on any other part of the coast they should find more feasible.

Shrewsbury then refers to Marlborough in terms which appear honourable and straightforward.

Writing upon this subject it is impossible to forget what has here become a very general discourse, the probability and conveniency of Your Majesty receiving my lord Marlborough into

¹ S.P. (*Dom.*), Admiralty Entry Book. For further details of the expedition, see Finch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, and House of Lords Papers, 1694-95, *H.M.C.*, pp. 484 *seq.*

² Cox, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 44-47.

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your favour. He has been with me since this news to offer his services, with all the expressions of duty and fidelity imaginable. What I can say by way of persuasion upon this subject will signify but little, since I very well remember when Your Majesty discoursed with me upon it in the spring, you were fully convinced of his usefulness ; *but some points remained of a nature too tender for me to pretend to advise upon,*¹ and of which Your Majesty is the only and best judge ; who if those could be committed to Your Majesty's satisfaction I can but think he is capable of being very serviceable. It is so unquestionably his interest to be faithful, that single argument makes me not doubt it.

Now if it be true that Shrewsbury while standing in this close, friendly, confidential relation to the King was all the time betraying him, was taking his orders from James, had in pursuance of those orders already delayed the sailing of the fleet in order to give the French time to make their preparations, his conduct is wicked and repulsive beyond description. Even Marlborough's alleged villainy pales before that of a trusted Minister using the executive power to ruin an attack upon which he was sending his countrymen and friends, and of caressing with Judas kisses the King who had loaded him with honours and kindness. But is it true ? The Jacobite records say it is true. Those who believe those records must say it is true. Those who believe that the Jacobite records are one of the mare's-nests of history are entitled to weigh the opposite probabilities.

Consider the position and character of Shrewsbury. He was a magnifico. He dwelt upon the mountain-tops of ceremony and virtue. Although he lived till nearly sixty, he was always much concerned with the state of his health. All that he did was done in a dignified and leisurely manner. He was capable none the less, as we have seen from his conduct in 1688, of vigorous decisions. He was greatly liked. His nickname was the 'King of Hearts.' He was enormously wealthy. He loved fox-hunting ; he loathed office and always longed to lay it down. His public work was disinterested. He had nothing to gain by a Jacobite restoration. He hated

¹ Author's italics.

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Catholicism with the hate of one who had quitted it. To the end of his life such part in public affairs as was extorted from him was always cast against the return of the Stuarts. It was into his hands that the dying Queen Anne gave the white staff in 1714 and thus determined the succession of the house of Hanover. Yet because he had conversed with Jacobite agents and exchanged friendly messages through his mother or through Lord Middleton with King James and thus "made his peace with Saint-Germains," we are told we must believe he was a public traitor to his country and to his cause, and a personal cheat to King William. We are sure he was neither.

There was only one man who had less incentive, less reason than Shrewsbury to play the traitor to King William and to reveal the war-secrets of the Government. That man was Danby. He was Prime Minister. He had been created by William at brief intervals Marquis of Caermarthen and now Duke of Leeds. Like Shrewsbury, he had nothing to gain by treason. He had nothing to hope for from King James that had not already been given him by King William. He was the lifelong enemy of France. He had played a leading part in making both the marriage and the Revolution which had brought King William to the throne. Whether we judge according to his self-interest or to his political convictions, it is incredible that he should have been disloyal to the Government of which he was himself the head. But the success or failure of the Brest expedition struck him not only as a Minister, but as a father. His eldest son, who now that his father was Duke, had become Marquis of Caermarthen, according to Dalrymple, "covered the landing with equal courage, bravely fighting for that country which his father was betraying." We are invited to believe that the Prime Minister was all the time acting under the orders of James II ; that he was concerned in betraying the Brest expedition to the French ; that he too conspired to delay the sailings of the English fleet until such time as the French could have made the best preparations to receive it. All this, contrary alike to nature and reason, we must accept because of a Jacobite document, purporting to emanate from James II, of October

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16, 1693, headed "Instructions by the Countess of Shrewsbury to the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lords Churchill and Russell," and of a second document of the same date headed "Instructions to the Earl of Danby and Lords Godolphin and Churchill by the Countess of Shrewsbury," in which after various generalities the exiled monarch imagined himself in a position to write by an intriguing woman

That His Majesty expects, upon this conjuncture, that the earl of Danby will do him what service he can, and most particularly, by giving him time how to act against the prince of Orange, and by letting him kno[w], as near as he can, what the said prince's designs may be, and his opinion how to prevent them. . . .

Earls Shrewsbury, Danby, Godolphin, Churchill, Russell, &c. that they do, what in prudence they can, to hinder money or retard it, and hinder the going out of the fleet, so soon as it might do otherwise.

Nothing could, of course, prevent James, deceived, self-deluded, and cruelly mocked, from issuing airy orders to the void, or Jacobite partisans from preserving those orders as proofs of an authority he never possessed, and as the means of aspersing the Englishmen they had good reason to hate. What astonishes is that this rubbish should have been swallowed, in default of better nourishment, by a long succession of historians and presented to posterity in its present form.

But there is one other document impugning Danby, equally with the others, which must be mentioned. It is the third of the Nairne Papers, the Landen Memorial. This is an undated, anonymous paper in an unknown hand, evidently prepared for the benefit of the French Government. It begins by enumerating James's leading supporters in England at that time :

The earl of Danby, prime minister to the Prince of Orange, lord Godolphin, a lord of the treasury and a member of the privy council, the earl of Shrewsbury, who has been his first secretary of state, Russell, who is of the cabinet council and has been an admiral, Churchill, who is the first lieutenant-general, the son of the duke of Beaufort and the son of the duke of Bolton. All

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these have served the prince of Orange with zeal, as long as they believed he could maintain himself in England, and have despised all sort of correspondence with the King.

Macaulay did not like this document, especially no doubt the last sentence quoted above. Moreover, he wished to clear Danby of all connexion with James. The Landen Memorial did not therefore fit in with his view. He sweeps it away with magnificent disdain :

This letter is altogether undeserving of consideration. The writer was evidently a silly hotheaded Jacobite, who knew nothing about the situation or character of any of the public men whom he mentioned. . . . Indeed the whole composition is a tissue of absurdities.¹

We need not quarrel with him in his estimate. But why limit this scornful distrust to one particular document among the Nairne Papers ? None rests on higher authority. All were equally included in the Carte Manuscripts. All have been equally printed by Macpherson. The criticism which Macaulay applies to this one applies equally to all these documents. If their evidence is conclusive when applied to Marlborough, it is equally valid against Danby and the others. Prejudice, bias, and deliberate malice can alone pick and choose. Good sense will equally reject them all.

To sum up, we assert as the basis for the future that : (1) the *Life of James II* after 1660 contained no scrap of his own handwriting, was never written by him nor seen by him, but was written by Dicconson after his death ; (2) that the Nairne Papers are without exception untrustworthy or mendacious documents fabricated out of the secret service reports to Saint-Germains, of gossip which their agents had heard in England or their versions of interviews which they had obtained with leading men ; (3) that it was the interest of the agents and possibly their instructions to bring as many well-known names as possible into their reports, and that it was the interest of the Court of Saint-Germains to make the most of these reports in order to influence the French

¹ *History*, iv, 426 n.

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Government ; (4) that no holograph or autograph letter of any kind was ever written by any of the incriminated statesmen to Saint-Germains ; (5) that there is no possible check upon the truth or accuracy either of the statements of the Jacobite agents or of the use made of those statements by Saint-Germains ; (6) that the Camaret Bay Letter, the only one of these documents purporting to be even the copy of a letter, is more likely from the circumstances in which it was written and from internal evidence to be a fabrication than any of the other Nairne Papers ; (7) that there is no evidence worthy of the name that Marlborough was ever in act or intention false to the cause for the sake of which he abandoned King James at Salisbury, and that it was never his interest or wish at any moment to aid or bring about a Jacobite restoration ; that, on the contrary, his interests were always opposed to it.

We assert further (8) that although there were compromising and irregular relations between King William's Ministers and the exiled King, no military or naval secret of any kind was wilfully betrayed ; (9) that no advantage was reaped by the Jacobites or by the French in consequence of any wrongful or wicked action by English Ministers, admirals, or generals ; and (10) that, on the contrary, all measures were taken throughout by them in loyalty, fidelity, earnestness, and industry, according to the primitive methods of those days, to prosper the fortunes of the British arms.

CHAPTER XXVII
THE FENWICK TRIAL
(1694-1697)

WE now reach one of the turning points of this story. At the end of 1694 the Queen was stricken with smallpox. Anne wrote a sisterly letter and asked to be allowed to come to her bedside. A civil answer was returned by Lady Derby, then Lady-in-Waiting, declining the visit for the moment on the very natural ground that it was "so necessary to keep the Queen as quiet as possible." The postscript was added, "Pray madam present my humble duty to the Princess." Sarah's shrewd eye read into this "that the disease was mortal," and so in a few days it proved to be. On December 28 Queen Mary died, beloved and mourned by her subjects and bitterly missed by her husband.

This unforeseen event produced profound changes in the prospects and relations of those with whom this story is concerned. Hitherto the natural expectation had been that Mary would long survive her husband, upon whose frail, fiery life so many assaults of disease, war, and conspiracy converged. An English Protestant Queen would then reign in her own right. Instead of this, the crown, thanks in part to the surrender which Anne had made of her rights, devolved on William alone for life. Thereafter it must come to Anne. Any day, any month, certainly as it seemed in a few years, the Princess to whom the sentinels had been ordered to deny their salutes, whom the Mayor of Bath had been forbidden to attend to church, who dwelt quietly with her family and intimate friends in the unfashionable chambers of Berkeley House, would be Queen of the three kingdoms. And at her side, linked by ties which the whole power of the dual reign had been unable to break, would stand the redoubtable couple without whom even in their darkest fortunes it had been impossible to reckon.

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No wonder Berkeley House, lately so deserted, was thronged with "people of all sorts flocking," in spite of Sarah's ironical smiles, "to pay their respects to the Prince and Princess."

The King had sense enough to know that it would be impossible to continue any longer an open difference with the Princess, without exposing himself to daily slights and a manifest disregard for his sovereign pleasure, for he could not hope that the nobility of England would be hindered, now the Queen was dead, from paying respect to a Princess who was next heir to him by Act of Parliament and who, if title by blood had taken place, would have had the crown before him; and he was well aware that everybody who had a mind to show they did not care for him would certainly do it by making their court to her.¹

But it was no longer Marlborough's part to raise an opposition to the King. From the moment that the Queen had breathed her last his interests were the same as William's. He shared William's resolve to break the power of France. He agreed with the whole character and purpose of his foreign policy. His patience enabled him to wait with contentment for that "sunshine day" of which Anne had written. By the mediation of Sunderland and Somers a formal reconciliation was effected between William and Anne. She was received with her proper ceremony when she waited upon the King at Kensington, and St James's Palace was prepared for her use. Thither in due course she carried Sarah. But the wounds of the quarrel still rankled. The relations between the sovereign and the heiress-presumptive, if correct, were also frigid, and Marlborough remained excluded for four more years from all employment, military or civil, at the front or at home. This, however, did not sway his course of action. Although William treated him with such prolonged and marked personal hostility, he became his steady supporter, and used his graceful arts to prevent anything like a rivalry or open breach between St James's and Whitehall. He continued from time to time to receive the Jacobite agents and preserve his connexion with King James. This was an easy task, since his imprisonment

¹ *Conduct*, pp. 109-110.

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and continuing disgrace at the hands of William pleaded for themselves at Saint-Germains.

Europe believed that the death of Queen Mary would greatly weaken William, and the Jacobites at home and in France looked forward to his speedy downfall. But in fact, owing largely to the concord re-established in the royal circle, he appeared at first even to be strengthened by his loss. His principal Ministers and advisers had long been Marlborough's friends, and were united with him by many open and some secret ties. The death of the Queen only consolidated the general accord of this strong and powerful group. Well was it so, for a new danger was already approaching.

The campaign of 1695 brought William his one success in the European war. He besieged and retook Namur in the teeth of the French armies, which now that Luxembourg was dead could find no better leader than a certain Marshal de Villeroy, destined afterwards to a more serious reverse. Some of Anne's friends and advisers urged her to make this happy event an occasion for establishing more agreeable relations with the King, and the Princess was eventually persuaded to send him her respectful but cordial congratulations. Sarah had been against this letter, expecting that it would only be treated with disdain. Her instinct was well founded. Since nothing happened, Marlborough a fortnight later wrote to Bentinck :

17 September 1695

This trouble is occasioned to your Lordship by a report we have that the pacquetboat is lost which went from Harwich with the letters of the 3rd instant ; the Princess having written one of that date to the King to congratulate His Majesty's good success in the taking of Namur, and being apprehensive her letter may have been lost with the pacquet, and that the King may not have received the marks of her concern and satisfaction for that great honour and advantage to His Majesty, has commanded me to enclose to Your Lordship a duplicate of her letter of the 3rd, desiring the favour of you to give it to the King, in case the former has been lost, and in case you find he has had it already, to spare His Majesty that trouble.¹

¹ *Correspondence of William and Portland*, ii, 67-68.

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Whether this was veiled sarcasm or not, the King took no notice, and no answer seems ever to have been received.

The year 1695 was filled with activities of the Jacobites. The connexions of their party spread throughout the country. In their political clubs, in elegant society, in lonely halls and manor-houses, in the taverns and on the village greens, they held their heads high and exchanged confident salutations. They could not believe that William, deprived of his English Queen, could stand alone. Beneath all their froth upon the surface there grew at a hundred points preparation for armed rebellion, if and when the hour should strike; and beneath this again, as so often happens in movements of this character, at the root of all, there festered a murder plot. King James was privy to both designs, though it cannot be said he directly or specifically commissioned the assassins. In the autumn he sent Berwick into England to concert the insurrection. For several months this daring young man moved about the country in disguise or lay hidden in London. He saw all the leading Jacobites, and endeavoured to bring their plans coherently to a head and fix the occasion.

Those who believe the Dicconson and Nairne allegations, set forth and embellished by Dalrymple and Macpherson, should find it curious that Berwick saw none of those leading politicians who we are assured were in such deep and guilty relationship with James. Above all, it must seem to them odd that he did not form contact with Marlborough, his uncle, who was out of office and under the displeasure of the Crown. One would have thought that the last man he would miss seeing was the General who only the year before had given so convincing a pledge and safeguard of his renewed loyalty to James as the betrayal of the Brest expedition in his Camaret Bay Letter. If Berwick had seen Marlborough he would certainly have recorded it in his *Memoirs*, not written until the events of his mission possessed only historical interest. No such idea ever seems to have occurred to him. Yet his father would surely not have sent him on so mortally perilous a mission without letting him know the full extent of his English connexions. The truth is that James in his inmost heart only placed



THE DUKE OF BERWICK
Niccolo Cassana
By permission of Earl Spencer

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limited reliance upon the friendly assurances that reached him from the Revolution leaders. They might serve to impress Louis XIV with the strength of the Jacobite movement, or as a basis for history ; but James would not risk the life of a well-loved son, nor Berwick his own life upon them.

Berwick found the resources of the conspiracy were by no means inconsiderable. As many as two thousand horse, "well appointed and even regimented," were ready to take the field on the first notice, and "several people of the highest distinction were also engaged in the business." But here came the deadlock. The English Jacobites were "unanimously agreed not to throw off the mask before a body of troops was actually landed in the island." Louis XIV was willing to supply these troops, but only on one condition. After his experiences in 1692 he was determined not to launch an expedition until after a rising had actually begun. Thus on both sides of the channel the potential rebels and the contingent invaders were in suspense, and waited each on the other.

Meanwhile, independently of Berwick, James had sent over a Sir George Barclay with instructions, written throughout in his own hand, authorizing him in comprehensive terms to commit such acts of hostility against William as he might think right and practicable. At the same time by various routes about twenty resolute members of James's bodyguard at Saint-Germains made their way into England, and by secret signals got into touch with Barclay in London. The most deadly and resolute plot since the Gunpowder Treason was now hatched. Every Saturday King William was wont to go a-hunting, and it was designed on his return from one of these excursions to fall upon him, overpower his guards, and kill him. Turnham Green, where on his homeward journey he recrossed the river by boat and was taken up by a new coach with a new escort, was chosen for the ambushade. For this desperate deed forty men were needed. Twenty had come from Saint-Germains. Twenty more must be found in England. In this delicate recruitment Barclay and his confederates next engaged themselves.

Berwick had now completed his dangerous mission, and

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could only report the seemingly insuperable obstacle which impeded either revolt or invasion. He now learned of the murder plot. His own statement upon it is remarkable :

. . . Having moreover received information, during my stay in London, that a conspiracy was carrying on against the person of the Prince of Orange, I thought, my principal commission being at an end, I ought to lose no time to return to France that I might not be confounded with the conspirators, whose design appeared to me difficult to execute.¹

Such an attitude in a man whose whole life was regarded in Europe as a model of soldierly uprightness reveals the cold-blooded ferocity of the times. Berwick would not himself act in the murder of William, but neither would he hamper those who did. He thought their enterprise forlorn ; but that was their affair. Accordingly he made his secret way back to France at the end of the year. He found the French ports full of troops ready for a descent the moment a Jacobite rising should begin. On the road to Paris he met his father hastening to the coast. He returned with King James to Calais, and both waited there week after week for the lightning flash which would cause the explosion.

The conspirators had fixed the afternoon of Saturday, February 15, 1696, as the moment for their onslaught, and forty determined men, mounted and armed to the teeth, were gathered hard by the landing-stage at Turnham Green. The Rye House Plot of the Whigs had got no farther than tavern talk : the Jacobite desperadoes had come to the very verge of well-concerted action. A fire was even prepared on the Dover cliffs to carry the news to the anxious party at Calais. But two of the forty, one from fear, the other from scruple, had given warning to Bentinck, and at the last moment William was with difficulty persuaded not to hunt that day.

The Government, having got some threads in their hands,

¹ *Memoirs*, i, 132. C. T. Wilson, Berwick's English biographer, defends his hero by saying that Sir George Barclay only intended to "seize" the King, and "no doubt" persuaded Berwick that "the job could be done without bodily hurt to the sovereign prize." He is able to quote another passage in the *Memoirs* in support of his argument. (*James II and the Duke of Berwick* (1876), p. 401.) This can be taken for what it is worth.

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speedily drew out the rest. Many of the conspirators were seized, the alarm was given, and the plot in all its gruesome reality and imminence was exposed. The nation was roused to fury. All classes rallied round the King. Parliament suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and the vast majority of its Members swore themselves into an association to defend the King's person and revenge his death. It was also resolved that Parliament should not be automatically dissolved upon a demise of the Crown from any cause, and that the succession should be instantly ensured in accordance with the Declaration of Right. Thus the confusion following the death of the King, on which James's party counted, would be effectually prevented. The trials and executions of the conspirators were speedy and not too numerous. Never had William enjoyed such popularity since the first days of his reign.

Even if the plot had not miscarried, James had no chance of regaining his lost crown across the murdered corpse of William. The leading Ministers were in the closest contact with Marlborough, and long forethought had taught them to link their future with Anne. No panic or disorder would have followed the bloody deed. Within the compass of a single day, swept upward by a wave of national indignation, Anne would have mounted the throne and Marlborough would have gripped the Army. Not a shot would have been fired. Not a dog would have barked. The new organism of government would have presented itself far stronger than the former combination. No doubt after a few months Marlborough would have again been found sending soothing messages to Saint-Germains explaining that in the temper of the nation it had been impossible for him to act otherwise, that his love for His Majesty and the debt he owed him, of which he would ever be sensible, made it his duty to preserve his Sacred Person from the certain destruction which would have awaited him on English soil; but that in other circumstances a day might come when he would be able to prove in a manner which none could doubt his unchanging devotion to the royal cause. He might well have added a few words of caution upon the importance of the Jacobites making no movement in England when the

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atmosphere was so unfavourable, and against a Government under the sovereignty of King James's loving daughter and so strongly supported by his ever—at heart—faithful servant. And it is very likely James would have passed the news on to Louis to show him that hope was not even yet extinct; and history would have quoted it as proof of Marlborough's treachery to Anne. This is but a speculative epitome of the realities.

The murder plot brought in its trail a great Parliamentary drama. Sir John Fenwick was no assassin, but he was deeply involved in the preparations for rebellion. Warrants were issued for his arrest, and after some time by chance he was caught. Well born himself, he was through his wife Lady Mary, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, connected with several of the greatest families. To save himself from swift condemnation and to gain time for powerful influences to come to his aid, he wrote a confession in which he charged Marlborough, Russell, Godolphin, and Shrewsbury with treasonable correspondence with Saint-Germains. The accusation against Marlborough was that he had sent a message by Floyd to King James asking for his pardon. "The answer to my Lord Marlborough" wrote Fenwick "was, that he was the greatest of criminals where he had the greatest obligations, but if he did him extraordinary service, he might hope for pardon; and a little after he did a considerable piece of service, of which we had an account by one sent on purpose by King James."¹ It was also alleged that King James relied on Marlborough to bring over the Army to his cause. Fenwick betrayed none of his confederates, the real Jacobites who had been waiting with arms and horses for the signal of revolt. He selected only those "false Jacobites"² who were or had been employed in the greatest stations round King William, and who had mocked the royal exile with vain promises and deceitful homage. William was in Holland. His action when he received this confession casts a revealing light upon the politics of his reign.

¹ Fenwick's confession is printed in *Buccleuch Papers*, *H.M.C.*, ii, 393-396, and elsewhere.

² The expression is Macaulay's.

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The King saw through Fenwick's manœuvre at a glance. He learned from it nothing that he had not known for years and discounted at its proper value. He had no intention of destroying the system upon which he ruled or of deranging the structure of his Government by tearing the heads off both great parties. He therefore sent the paper home to his Council with assurances to its incriminated members that his confidence in them was utterly unaffected by such nonsense. This for the moment sufficed.

But when Parliament was apprised of the confession a graver situation supervened. Nobody would have been surprised at the intrigues of Tories with the Jacobites. It was in their blood. But here were the immaculate Whigs aspersed. The House of Commons was determined to test the truth of Fenwick's accusations. Brought to the bar, he refused to amplify or prove what he had written. One Member, Colonel Godfrey, the husband of Arabella, no doubt at Marlborough's desire, specifically invited him across the chamber to state fully all he alleged against Marlborough. But Fenwick excused himself. Brought at the request of Parliament before the King, he persisted in his refusal. We must presume that, like the historians, he had no proofs, and, like them, was merely repeating the secret talk of the inner Jacobite circles. He was sent back to prison. The charge under which he lay was in any case grievous. Still, since it was not concerned with the actual murder plot, it might not have entailed the forfeit of life. But now he had drawn upon himself the wrath of both great parties, and particularly of the Whigs, who saw two of their most famous leaders impugned without proof or reason. He had also aroused the enmity alike of the powerful men he had accused, and of others whom he might have accused. He had deeply angered the King by what to William was an obvious attempt to rupture his Government. Meanwhile one of the two witnesses indispensable to the treason charge had been bribed or terrorized out of the country, and it seemed that the law stood dumb before him. It was at this stage that the Commons fell back upon the last reserve weapon of the State—an Act of Attainder.

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There is no need here to describe the many vehement debates, narrow and exciting divisions, and Parliamentary situations which marked the two months' passage of the Bill through both Houses. They have been so often brilliantly told. We are not concerned with the fate of Sir John Fenwick, but only with the effects of his charges upon Marlborough and the other aspersed statesmen. None of them had been in any way concerned either in the assassination plot or in the projected rebellion. All of them had at some time or other conversed or trafficked with Jacobite agents and thus easily, in King William's phrase, "made their peace with Saint-Germains." Their prolonged ordeal was most severe. When, in a moment of intense public feeling and widespread suspicion, men have to defend themselves from terrible charges, the fact that they have been guilty of comparatively venial conduct of the same kind, compromising in essence and still more in appearance, may shake the strongest nerve and wear down the boldest spirit.

"Every one of the accused persons," says Macaulay,

behaved himself in a manner singularly characteristic. Marlborough, the most culpable of all, preserved a serenity, mild, majestic, and slightly contemptuous. Russell, scarcely less criminal than Marlborough, went into a towering passion, and breathed nothing but vengeance against the villainous informer. Godolphin, uneasy, but wary, reserved, and self-possessed, prepared himself to stand on the defensive. But Shrewsbury, who of all the four was the least to blame, was utterly overwhelmed.¹

It is true that Shrewsbury crumpled under the strain. On September 8, 1696, he wrote to the King a letter which is most instructive, both in itself and for the answer it received :

. . . After your Majesty was pleased to allow me to lay down my employment, it was more than a year before I once saw my lord Middleton ; then he came, and staid in town awhile, and returned to the country ; but a little before the La Hogue business, he came up again, and upon that alarm, being put in the Tower, when people were permitted to see him, I visited him as often as I thought decent, for the nearness of our alliance. [They were relations.]

¹ *History*, iv, 723-724.

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Upon his enlargement, one night at supper, when he was pretty well in drink, he told me he intended to go beyond seas, and asked if I would command him no service. I then told him, by the course he was taking, it would never be in his power to do himself or his friends service; and if the time should come that he expected, I looked upon myself as an offender not to be forgiven, and therefore he should never find me asking it. In the condition he was then, he seemed shocked at my answer; and it being some months after before he went, he never mentioned his own going, or any thing else, to me, but left a message with my aunt [Middleton's wife] that he thought it better to say nothing to me, but that I might depend upon his good offices upon any occasion, and in the same manner he relied upon mine here; and had left me trustee for the small concerns he had in England. I only bowed, and told her I should always be ready to serve her, or him, or their children.

Your majesty now knows the extent of my crime, and if I do not flatter myself, it is no more than a King may forgive.

I am sure when I consider with what reason, justice, and generosity your majesty has weighed this man's information I have little cause to apprehend your ill opinion upon his malice. I wish it were as easy to answer for the reasonableness of the generality of the world. When such a base invention shall be made public, they may perhaps make me incapable of serving you; but if till now I had had neither interest nor inclination, the noble and frank manner with which your majesty has used me upon this occasion, shall ever be owned with all the gratitude in my power.

This confession fell short of the facts. William knew more from the Jacobite talk of the day. But the King set himself to comfort his Minister. "In sending you Sir John Fenwick's paper," he wrote,

I assured you, that I was persuaded his accusation was false, of which I am now fully convinced, by your answer, and perfectly satisfied with the ingenuous confession of what passed between you and Lord Middleton, which can by no means be imputed to you as a crime. And indeed you may be assured, that this business, so far from making on me any unfavourable impression, will, on the contrary, if possible, in future, strengthen my confidence in you, and my friendship can admit of no increase.¹

¹ Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 147-148, 151. William's reply is dated September 10/20.

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But Shrewsbury was inconsolable. He buried himself in the country. He declared that a fall out hunting had rendered him unfit for public business. Certainly his health broke down completely. He repeatedly but in vain besought William to allow him to resign. Meanwhile he seems to have left Marlborough to watch over his interests, for we have one of Marlborough's very rare letters in this period to him :

December 2, 1696

Wednesday night—

Although I have not troubled your Grace with my letters I have not been wanting in inquiring constantly how you did. I did about a fortnight ago write a letter to acquaint you with what I had observed of some people, in hopes Mr Arden would have called upon me as he promised, but I did not care to send it by post, and so it was burnt. We had yesterday Sir Jo. Fenwick at the House, and I think all went as well as you could wish. I do not send you the particulars, knowing you must have it more exactly from others; but on this occasion I should be wanting if I did not let you know that Lord Rochester has behaved himself on all this occasion like a friend ; and in a conversation he had with me he expressed himself as a real servant of yours, and I think it would not be amiss if you took notice of it to him. . . .¹

Wharton also wrote to Shrewsbury describing what happened when Fenwick came before the Lords :

. . . after the reading of the paper, my lord Marlborough first stood up and spoke to this purpose : “ that he did not wonder to find a man in danger, willing to throw his guilt upon any other body ; that he had some satisfaction to be owned in such good company ; but that he assured their lordships that he had [had] no sort of conversation with him, upon any account whatsoever, since this Government, which he said upon his word and honour.” . . . After which my lord Godolphin said, “ that he found himself named in two places, first, as having been looked upon as being in King James's interest, from the beginning, and afterwards, as having entered into a negotiation, as was expressed in the paper. As to the first, he confessed he was one of those that had, to the last, continued in King James's service, and he did not know, but from that, King James and his friends might imagine him to con-

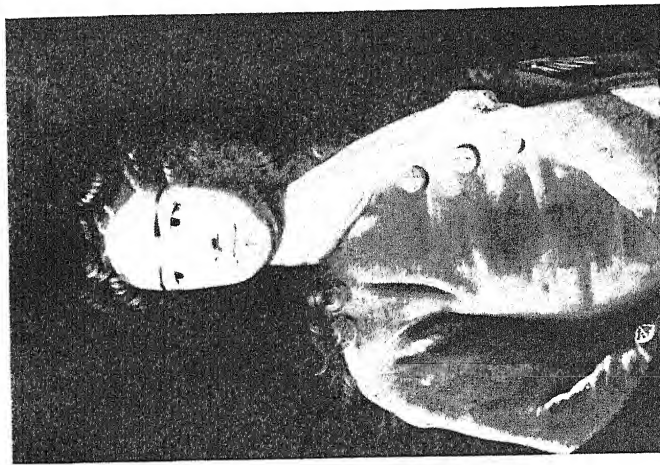
¹ Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 427.



THE EARL OF AYLESBURY
P. Harrewijn
From a print in the British Museum



SIR JOHN FENWICK
Willem Wissing
From a print in the British Museum



THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY
School of Kneller
National Portrait Gallery

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tinue in that interest, but as to the latter part, there was nothing in the world so false.”¹

In the course of these proceedings a peculiar complication had arisen. Mordaunt, already mentioned as Monmouth, and afterwards Earl of Peterborough, although himself an alleged Jacobite, impelled by his mischievous instincts and the hope of throwing the Government into disorder, endeavoured secretly to persuade Fenwick through his wife to point and elaborate his charges, especially against Marlborough, assuring him that this was the path to safety. Fenwick pondered anxiously upon this suggestion. Ailesbury was a fellow-prisoner in the Tower. Though never a serious rebel, he was an avowed Jacobite and had been drawn unwitting into dangerous company on more than one occasion. Fenwick endeavoured to persuade Ailesbury to join with him in pressing his charges.² Ailesbury probably knew as much as Fenwick of all that had been whispered for some time past in the ranks of the English Jacobites. His appearance beside Fenwick at the bar with corroborative allegations would, in the then temper of both Houses, and still more of the public, have created an ugly situation for Marlborough and the impugned Ministers. Ailesbury, however, was, as we have noted, a friend of Marlborough's. They had been thrown together at Court in the days of Charles II. He therefore sought Marlborough's advice through channels which were open. The counsel he received was to have nothing to do with Fenwick and to remain quiet till after the execution, when he would soon be released and all would be well.³ He had the wisdom to act accordingly, and ever afterwards believed that he had rendered Marlborough an important personal service. Fenwick, unsupported by Ailesbury, rejected Monmouth's suggestions. Monmouth, angered at this, turned against him with extreme bitterness. Lady Mary Fenwick then in revenge exposed Monmouth's conduct to

¹ December 1, 1696, Coxe; *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 438-439. According to the Dutch envoy, L'Hermitage, Marlborough also said in the course of this speech "que depuis son départ [from King James in 1688] on ne sauroit l'accuser de la moindre chose." Add. MSS., 17677, Q.Q., f. 626.

² Buccleuch Papers, H.M.C., ii, 414.

³ Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, pp. 413-415.

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the Lords. There was general indignation at this mischief-mongering. He was stripped of his offices and sent to the Tower, from which he was released only upon abject apologies. But this was not the end of him.

The process of attainder crawled remorselessly forward stage by stage. Marlborough, entirely unaffected by the strain which had broken Shrewsbury and intimidated Godolphin, comported himself with the confidence and vigour of a man conscious of his own innocence. He actively pressed forward the Bill, and voted for it in the important divisions.¹ Calmly and inexorably he threw his whole influence against Fenwick, and it was publicly remarked that he was zealous for his condemnation. His brother George Churchill, who had commanded a ship at the battle of La Hogue with credit and was a member of the House of Commons, observed less decorum. "Damn him!" he exclaimed, with brutal frankness, in the Lobby; "thrust a billet down his throat. Dead men tell no tales."² But in truth Fenwick had no tales to tell. He had founded his charges on nothing but hearsay; he had no proof of any kind.

The Court of Saint-Germain and the Jacobite world watched his ordeal with intense emotion. They saw him a martyr for their cause. Was there, then, no means by which they could save him? Was this faithful, heroic man to be hounded to his death by that very "deserter of Salisbury" who had eighteen months before betrayed, as we are assured they knew, the secret of the Brest expedition? Where was the Camaret Bay Letter? Now was the time to use it. It was not even necessary to publish it. The mere threat privately conveyed to Marlborough that it would be sent to King William, unless he quitted his pursuit of Fenwick, would surely have sufficed. When we realize the passion which is excited by the shedding of blood for political crimes, it is incredible that James, Melfort, and Nairne, if they had had this hold over Marl-

¹ Cf. Vernon to Shrewsbury, November 24, 1696: "He [Marlborough] seems very hearty in this matter [Fenwick's attainder] and as if he would push it." (*The Vernon Letters*, i, 72.)

² Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 412.

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borough, did not use it; or that in the presence of such a threat he would have dared to persevere against Fenwick. We are told that there was a letter at Saint-Germains of such a character that the mere sight of it twenty years after frightened the Duke of Marlborough out of England.¹ Surely they owed it to Fenwick to use their weapon now in his defence? Why did they not do it? The answer is, because it did not exist. Thus Marlborough sternly pursued his course as if his conscience were clear of any shameful or deadly deed. Perhaps it was. Sir John Fenwick was beheaded on Tower Hill on January 28, 1697.

¹ See above, pp. 430-32.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AVARICE AND CHARM

THERE is no virtue so universally unpopular as frugality. Every one likes the handsome spender who offers lavish hospitality and eases his path through life by a shower of money. Every one dislikes the parsimonious man who is gathering rather than dispersing wealth. Censure is particularly turned upon those who are careful about small sums. In the days of which we are writing all who held high public appointments were accustomed and expected to live in fine style and at a profuse expense. The habit of the medieval knight flinging his purse to the landlord, or a piece of gold to a lackey, was unconsciously adopted as a guide for a gentleman. Public opinion was more critical about how important people spent their money than about how they acquired it. Graft, pilfering, and corruption, unless too flagrant, were leniently judged in the governing circle; stinting and saving were resented as peculiar. It does not, however, follow that those who are the most extravagant and easy with their money are the most unselfish, nor that those who are the most niggardly are the most mean. There is a happy medium which can only be defined for each individual by the general opinion of the society in which he lives.

Judged by this standard, Marlborough lay under reproach. He was at once highly acquisitive in the gaining of money and extremely careful in the spending of it. In those days, when almost the only other form of wealth was landed property, public appointments all had a recognized money value. Every step in the commissioned ranks of the Army, whether gained by seniority or good service, had to be purchased. A captaincy, a majority, a colonelcy, the command of a regiment, of a troop of Life Guards; a high post in the Quartermaster-General's department, a seat upon the

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Board of Admiralty, even the offices of the Court and around the Royal Person, all passed to new recipients of the royal favour at a market price which varied with supply and demand like the membership of the New York Stock Exchange. An officer without means could not take his promotion. An officer who had reached high rank was a substantial proprietor, carrying with him in his own person and his appointments the cumulative and reinvested savings of his career. In all but extreme cases these vested interests were respected. There was nothing secret or corrupt about them. They were the system and the custom, and it is only within living memory that the principle of purchase was abolished in the British Army. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries those who had no money had no standing. All who held offices of authority were men of property whose relative worldly wealth could be appraised almost as accurately by the positions they filled as by the acres they owned. The Crown and the Executive found in this system guarantees of fidelity and good conduct, and no one troubled himself about the obstacles placed in the path of unpropertied ability. Instances there were to the contrary; but in the main it was not until the French Revolution that the glorious principle of *la carrière ouverte aux talents* was proclaimed or even comprehended.

Marlborough's childhood had been lived in penury. Food and clothing in Ashe House for Sir Winston Churchill's lusty brood were inferior in quantity and quality, and above all in variety, to the standard of a well-to-do modern English artisan or strong, industrious navvy. While old silver appeared upon the tables, while the living-rooms contained pieces of furniture which persons of taste would now value and admire, while the family escutcheon boasted the achievements of many generations, the physical conditions were primitive and narrow. But to Marlborough's early years there was an added sting. He learned almost as soon as he could walk and speak that he and his father and mother were dependants upon the charity and goodwill of his grandmother. As he grew older he saw the straits to which the impoverishments

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of a Cavalier had reduced his father. He heard the talk of the exactions of the Roundheads and of the frequent litigation for quite small sums in which all the grown-ups of the household were engaged with the Government or with the other members of their family. When, for his father's services and his own good looks, he was taken as a page at Court, he was penniless. He might be finely dressed and well fed, but he was penniless among those who monopolized a large proportion of the entire wealth of the kingdom. On every side his seeming equals were youths of noble fortune, heirs to vast estates and splendid titles. He was the earthenware pot among the iron ones. This was his second strong impression of life.

Before he was eighteen he realized that, unless he could make and save money, he could neither have a career, nor a bride, nor a home, nor even a modest independence. It is therefore not at all surprising, however unromantic, that his first preoccupation was the gathering of money. In his twenties and thirties his temper was very similar to that which we have attributed to the French nation—always more generous of life than treasure, ready to encounter every personal hazard, prodigal of blood, but deeply concerned about money. His thrift was not without a certain grandeur, a habit of self-denial differing altogether from a miser's sordidness. We have seen how when, after heartbreaking postponements, he married a girl almost as poor as himself he could offer her no home. We have seen him at twenty-eight marrying for love, and at the same time helping his father out of debt by resigning his own reversionary interest in the small family estate. In all supreme matters his actions were those of a generous spirit. His need and desire to possess a competence and not to be crippled in his career did not outweigh—nay, were cast aside by—true love and family duty.

But these great decisions only made thrift and circumspection more imperative. He could not afford to gamble and carouse with his equals. He could not indulge in the slightest personal extravagance. He ate sparingly, drank little, always more readily at the expense of others than his own, and eschewed all kind of display in dress. He was

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always strict and punctilious in money matters. He paid his bills with the utmost promptitude. He condescended to keep careful accounts in his own handwriting about quite small household affairs, and generally behaved more like a tradesman whose livelihood depends upon his honesty and solvency than like a gay and gallant courtier and fine gentleman. Even now, fifteen years later, after having held several lucrative posts, he was by far the poorest man in the high circle in which he had taken his natural place. He was an Earl, but the most impecunious in England. He was the first Lieutenant-General, but unemployed. He had braved the displeasure of the Crown. It might well be that his career was closed for many years. The slightest financial imprudence would be fatal to his future. Thus he continued those habits of strict and austere personal economy which had been ingrained in childhood and youth, and without which he would certainly have been submerged.

All this was very deplorable, and no doubt the historians are right to mock and sneer at him. But their taunts are only an echo of the gibes and jokes of his contemporaries. Probably many stories of meanness were fastened on him, once he had that reputation, which are not true. But, true or false or merely exaggerated, they must be accepted by his biographer as representing the impression of the society in which he lived. He had, we are told, in 1692 but three coats ("depuis trois ans il n'a fait que trois habits modestes"), one of which he wore only on the greatest State occasions. "He was," wrote Sarah, "naturally genteel, without the least affectation, and handsome as an angel, tho' ever so carelessly drest." He would walk home from the Palace through the muddy streets to save the hire of a sedan chair. He entertained very few. Even when he wished to gain officers of the Army to his faction, he spent nothing on their meat and drink. Macaulay is no doubt right in stating gleefully that when he was robbed of five hundred guineas by a highwayman it was a bitter blow.¹

The tales of his great period are more fanciful ; but in him,

¹ Denbigh Papers, *H.M.C.*, vii, 220; the Duchess of Marlborough to David Mallet, October 4, 1744 (Spencer MSS.); Luttrell's *Diary*, ii, 550; Macaulay, iv, 296.

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if true, less excusable. "Of the wonderful avarice of this very great man," wrote Seward in his *Anecdotes*, published in 1795,

the late Lord Bath used to tell the following story : Himself and his brother, General Pulteney (who had been Aid-du-Camp to the Duke in Flanders), were playing at cards at a house in Bath, at that time known by the name of Westgate House, and which then happened to be the lodgings of Lord Bath. The Duke had lost some money, and on going away desired General Pulteney to lend him sixpence [*i.e.*, about half a crown] to pay his chair-hire. This he of course did, and when the Duke had left the room, Lord Bath said to his brother, "I would venture any sum, now, that the Duke goes home on foot. Do pray follow him out." The General followed him and to his astonishment saw him walk home to his lodgings.¹

Seward tells another tale which seems to show the Duke kept accounts, even with his beloved Sarah, but which certainly does not show him so niggardly in large as in petty sums of money.

The Duke had noticed the behaviour of a young officer in an engagement in Flanders, and sent him over to England with some despatches, and with a letter to the Duchess, recommending him to her to procure a superior Commission for him in the army. The Duchess read the letter, and approved of it, but asked the young man where the thousand pounds were for his increase of rank [*i.e.*, the purchase money he had to pay on promotion to the officer whose vacancy he filled]. The young man blushed, and said that he was really master of no such sum. "Well, then," said she, "you may return to the Duke." This he did very soon afterwards, and told him how he had been received by the Duchess. The Duke laughingly said, "Well, I thought that it would be so ; you shall, however, do better another time," and presenting him with a thousand pounds, sent him over to England. The last expedition proved a successful one.²

There is the story on which Swift founded the scathing insult "that he had risked his life for a pair of stockings." When as Commander-in-Chief the gaiters he wore were so drenched that they had to be cut off him, he gave meticulous instructions to his orderly, before a number of officers,

¹ P. 257.

² P. 258.

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apparently without any proper sense of shame, to rip them up the seams, so that they could be resewn.¹ There is the story that Prince Eugene

gave a concise characteristic of him upon receiving a letter from him that he could not read, therefore gave it to another person to try if he could read it to him. He said one difficulty was that he never put a tittle upon an *i*, to which the Prince answered, "That saved ink."²

His handwriting, as the reader may see for himself, disproves this tale: and Eugene might only have been amusing himself by emphasizing a foible in a friend and comrade he ever admired. But let that pass.

There is the story of the officer who brought a message at night to his tent. The Duke, roused from slumber, asked him whether it was in writing or by word of mouth, and on learning that it was not written said, "Then put out the lantern."³ Possibly he did not wish the way he took the news to be noticed. But never mind: he may well have been saving tallow.⁴ It seems undeniable that when he planned the celebrated march to the Danube he also scheduled which brigades and divisions of his army he would dine with at the different dates, without, of course, disclosing the places where the camps would lie. The splendid silver wine-flasks, or pilgrim bottles—as big as small barrels—which have been so much admired travelled with him in his campaigns; but they and other luxurious trappings were used only on State occasions when it was his duty to entertain the princes and generals of the Grand Alliance, or for some special rejoicing. "Though no epicure himself," says Seward,

the Duke had, in common with Louis XIV, a pleasure in seeing others eat, and when he was particularly pleased exercised this

¹ Lansdowne MSS., 825, f. 121. G. M. Trevelyan, *Ramillies and the Union with Scotland*, p. 7.

² Dartmouth, note to Burnet, iii, 267. For an example of Marlborough's clear handwriting see plate facing p. 272. Eugene's own writing is very much less legible than Marlborough's. The same story was told at the same time of a Professor of History at Basel (*The Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (edition 1928), p. 66).

³ Cf. Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 258.

⁴ The great Moltke, brought up in the sparse austerity of Old Prussia, was always noticeably particular about snuffing the candles.

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pleasure, though it cost him something. Lord Cadogan used to say that he remembered seeing the Duke completely out of humour one day, a thing very unusual with him, and much agitated ; in the evening, however, a messenger arrived who brought him some news which he liked. He immediately ordered the messenger to be placed in a situation where no one could speak to him, and ordered his coach to be opened, and some cantines to be taken out, containing hams and other good things, and spread before some of the principal officers, he looking on and tasting nothing.¹

This incident was perhaps typical. Ordinarily, instead of keeping, as was the custom of generals in the field of those days, a sumptuous open table to which a fine company sat down every night when war permitted, Marlborough lived very simply with his immediate personal staff. This, again, was a grievous fault in a General at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Brigadiers and even Colonels were attended by sumpter-horses and wagons suitable to their dignity. Although hard fare was recognized to be the lot of the private men and subordinate officers, and such as their station required, it was most inappropriate that the Commander-in-Chief of the main army of a European coalition with princely revenues at his disposal should not travel and dine in the luxury of his august position. What a pitiful contrast to the style in which the Great Monarch took the field ! No mistresses ; no actors, no poets, no painters, not even a historian—except the chaplain, Dr Hare ; no proper following of toadies and hangers-on ; no roads blocked with convoys of cooks and comforts—just coarse, squalid simplicity—and simplicity basely interested in saving sixpence ! Simplicity swayed by that shabby thought ! Where, then, is the glory of war ? How could any man who fell so far short of the spirit of war in those days hope to win glory ? But battles are imperious, contrary things, and one has to reckon with battles.

Marlborough seems to have regarded war merely as a serious business in which he was interested to the exclusion of pleasures and personal indulgences. All this puts his

¹ Seward, *Anecdotes*, p. 257.

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admirers to shame. One feels that virtues, valour, and victories alike are tarnished by such traits. We blush ; but we must not conceal these shocking facts or legends. The truth is that from his upbringing and the pressures of his life he had acquired a hatred of waste of money in all its forms, and especially of frittering away comparatively small sums. He resembled a certain type of modern millionaires, who accumulate wealth unceasingly, spend hardly anything upon themselves, and use their fortunes for the well-being of their families and the endowment of their children, or apply them to great buildings or public objects.

He was like them in other ways. He had that curious mixture of business capacity and Imperial vision which in our own day excited the admirers and the critics of Cecil Rhodes. In 1666 two French-Canadian Protestants who had opened up the fur trade around Hudson Bay, but had found no support from their own Government either in Quebec or Paris, came to England and obtained an audience of King Charles II. After a successful voyage a permanent company was formed. In 1670 the King granted a charter "to the Governor and Company of adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay." Prince Rupert, twelve times re-elected till his death, was the first Governor. In 1683 James, Duke of York, was elected to succeed him. On James's accession John Churchill was chosen. He thus became the third¹ Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. "The new governor," we are told, "threw himself heartily into the work of the Company."² In 1688 it declared a dividend of 50 per cent. ; in 1689 a dividend of 25 per cent. was paid ; in 1690 of 75 per cent. ; and in that year it was decided to triple by a share-splitting operation the value of its original stock. Nor was the expansion of the original £10,500 capital unjustified. The stocks in the warehouse were alone worth that sum ; the trapping of the year was expected to bring in £20,000 worth of beaver ; and a claim for damages against the French for £100,000 was

¹ Not, as Lord Wolseley says, the second.

² G. Bryce, *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (1900), p. 30.

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to be made. The Company then decided to increase its trade and widen the scale of its operations. The river running into the west side of the bay far to the north was named, in honour of the new Governor, Churchill River, and at its mouth in 1686 a new port and trading centre for the north and west of Canada was founded. This project is alive to-day. Many instances are given by the historians of the Hudson's Bay Company of the energy and helpfulness of Lord Churchill.

Churchill's part in the Revolution gave the company a good position in the new reign. In June 1689 he sent out instructions for William and Mary to be proclaimed in the posts on the shores of the bay. "He was able shortly after to report to his Company that a hundred marines had been detailed to protect the Company's ships." The enthusiasm of the directors and shareholders at this mark of consideration obtained through the influence of Lord Churchill was very great, and we learn from the minutes that profuse thanks were given to the Governor, and a piece of plate of solid gold worth a hundred guineas was presented to him for his distinguished services. His arrest and imprisonment in 1692 cut through these happy proceedings. It was indispensable to the Company that its monopoly and its charter should have a Governor with great influence at Court. Churchill's dismissal from the Army and all official employments, which we have already described, carried with it this private loss as well. In November 1692 Sir Stephen Evance was elected Governor in his place.

His habit of personal economy extended to the whole control of Marlborough's armies. He was always worrying about the cost of things in a manner that seemed most petty and unbecoming. It was remarkable, indeed, that he was so popular with the troops ; but, then, of course, he always took care that they got their rations and pay punctually, and the country people were always paid promptly for their supplies, so that the rank and file did not feel his cheeseparings at all, and only saw the victories. This naturally prevented their making a true judgment of his meanness. These simple

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common soldiers only noticed that they were well looked after and never once led to failure of any kind. Little did they know about the candle story or the gaiters story. Little would they have cared if they had—so defective was their sense of proportion. Indeed, they might only have made jokes about it, and loved him all the more. But history cannot be thus easily satisfied; and we must record the truth. Both Frederick the Great and Napoleon were remarkable for the economy with which they managed their armies. But Marlborough made money go farther in the field than either, or, indeed, than any commander then or since, except perhaps Sir Herbert Kitchener, who kept the accounts of his reconquest of the Sudan as if he had been the manager of an emporium.

We have tried, however painful it may be, to set this out with naked candour. There are, on the other hand, a few mitigating features which may also be mentioned. Paget says :

His declining, when in poverty and disgrace, to accept the generosity of the Princess Anne; his repeated refusal of the government of the Netherlands, with its princely income of £60,000 a year; his generosity to young and deserving officers; his application of all the money at his private disposal amongst the wounded officers of the enemy after the battle of Malplaquet; his liberal provision during his own lifetime for his children . . .¹

are all to be counted in his favour. When to these are added his early imprudences of marrying for love and paying his father's debts at the expense of his inheritance, it may perhaps be recognized that he was not wholly base and sordid. We do not venture to press the point too far.

Sarah's testimony must, of course, be viewed with extreme suspicion as that of a wife hopelessly prejudiced—indeed, shamefully biased—in her husband's favour. You can do nothing with such people. Still, a wife has exceptional opportunities of seeing the seamy side of a husband's character.

¹ *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 12, quoting Alison, *Marlborough*, i, 283; ii, 394-395.

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Moreover, Sarah does not conceal what is unworthy. "From the very beginning of his life," she wrote,

he never spent a shilling beyond what his income was. . . . The Duke of Marlborough had never any vanity, and therefore living so many years with great employments, he left a great estate: which was no wonder he should do, since he lived long and never threw any money away. And money was for many years at six per cent. And I have heard him solemnly swear, when it was of no signification to do it to me, that he never in the whole reign of Queen Anne sold one commission, title, or anything to anybody when he had so much favour from Queen Anne. He had a great deal of compassion in his nature, and to those that he had been long acquainted with he gave money out of his pocket to those that were poor, tho' they were not of his opinion. I am living witness of this: for I was directed by him to pay some pensions when he was abroad, and have letters that prove the truth of it from the persons.¹

Apparently Marlborough's economies only fell upon himself and did not extend to his home and family. "Soon after my marriage," Sarah says again,

when our affairs were so narrow that a good degree of frugality was necessary, Lord Marlborough, *tho his Inclination lay enough that way,*² yet by reason of an indulgent gentleness that is natural to him he could not manage matters so as was convenient for our circumstances, this obliged me to enter into the management of my family.³

It is said that, though Marlborough was stingy in small matters—tips and the like—which may well be taken as proved against him, he was uncommonly courteous and considerate to his subordinates and inferiors in the social scale, and a most kind-hearted man. "For his natural good temper," says Ailesbury, "he never had his equal. He could not chide a servant and was the worst served possible, and in command he could not give a harsh word, no not to the meanest Sergeant, Corporal, or soldier."⁴ We have found a new confirmation of Ailesbury's testimony that Marlborough, for all his sagacity in large matters, and ridiculous small

¹ Appendix, II.

² Sarah's italics.

³ Appendix, I.

⁴ *Memoirs*, p. 521.

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personal economies, was gentle to the point of laxity with his servants.¹

There is also the story of his cloak and the rainstorm in 1709 which shows that his natural gentleness was unchanged by years of war and triumph :

Riding out one day with Commissary Marriot, it began to rain, and the duke called for his cloak ; Marriot having had his

¹ *Marlborough to Sarah* (Blenheim MSS.)

“ HAGUE,

“ April 7, 1711

* “I have had the pleasure of yours of the 21 by Sr. R[ichard] T[emple] but none by the post. As to my opinion about the selling of Montague House, if the young people could get forty thousand pounds, and be so wise as to pay off so much of their debt, I should be of opinion it were a prudent action, but then they must not think of building, but be contented with such a house as might be bought or hired.

“I desire you will send for Will Lovegrove, and shew him this enclosed paper so that I may know where to find my wine, for it is not in my cellar ; if it be possible, I should be glad to know where this wine is before I leave this place, which will be about the end of next week.

“ *encloses* [in the Duke's own hand]

a list of the remainder of stores given me by Will: Lovegrove when I went last for England, and I expected to have found in my cellar, but find no more than what is mentioned on the other side.

2 Pieces of old Mossell	
5 Pieces of New Mossell	
17 dossen of old Sack	
9 dossen pints of Sack	
3 dossen quarts	} Sr. Hen: furnis
4 dossen pints	
9 dossen quarts of Barbados Water	
14 quartes of Usqu bath	
12 bottles of Italian Wine	
39 bottles of King Augustus Tuckay	
80 bottles of Pr. Royalles old Tuckay	
17 bottles of what came last from Pr. Royall the rest put into the Caske	
2 Caskes with that which is fild upp	

[On the other side]

An Act of what Wine was found in His Graces Cellar att the Hague—

Pieces of Rhenish	4
Pieces of Tockay	2
Quart bottles of Tockay	13
Pints ditto	12
Quart bottles of Barbadoes Water	6
Quart bottles of Sack	10
Pints ditto	21

[Endorsed by Sarah]

this Will Lovegrove cheated & sold the Duke's wine, & most of his servants were of the same sort.”

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put on by his servant in an instant. The duke's attendant not bringing the cloak, he called again ; but the man still continued puzzling about the straps and buckles. At last the rain increased very much, and the duke repeated his call, adding, what was he about that he did not bring the cloak ? " You must stay," grumbled the man, " if it rains cats and dogs, till I can get at it." The duke only turned to Marriot, and said, very coolly, " Now I would not be of that man's temper for all the world." ¹

These qualities also played their part in European history. " Of all the men I ever knew," wrote Lord Chesterfield,

the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them. Indeed, he got the most by them ; and contrary to the custom of profound historians who always assign deep causes for great events, I ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough's greatness to those graces. He had no brightness—nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly an excellent plain understanding and sound judgment ; but these qualities would probably have never raised him higher than they found him, which was page to James II's Queen. But then the graces protected and promoted him. His figure was beautiful ; but his manner was irresistible either by man or woman. It was by this engaging graceful manner that he was enabled, during all the war, to connect the various and jarring Powers of the Grand Alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies and wrongheadedness. Whatever Court he went to (and he was often obliged to go to restive and refractory ones) he brought them into his measures. The Pensionary Heinsius, who had governed the United Provinces for forty years, was absolutely governed by him. He was always cool, and nobody ever observed the least variation in his countenance ; he could refuse more easily than others could grant ; and those who went from him the most dissatisfied as to the substance of their business, were yet charmed by his manner, and, as it were, comforted by it. ²

The Dutch Deputy Sicco van Goslinga, whose hostile opinions we shall encounter later on, has left on record what

¹ Seward, *Anecdotes*, ii, 259–260.

² *Letters* (ed. Mahon), i, 221, 222.

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is on the whole the best word-picture of him as he was a few years later.¹

Here is his Portrait, drawn to the best of my insight. He is a man of birth : about the middle height, and the best figure in the world : his features without fault, fine, sparkling eyes, good teeth, and his complexion such a mixture of white and red as the fairer sex might envy : in brief, except for his legs, which are too thin, one of the handsomest men ever seen. His mind is keen and subtle [*il a beaucoup d'esprit, et délicate*], his judgment very clear and sound, his insight both quick and deep, with a consummate knowledge of men which no false show of merit can deceive. He expresses himself well, and even his very bad French is agreeable : his voice is harmonious, and as a speaker in his own language he is reckoned among the best. His address is most courteous, and while his handsome and well-graced countenance engages every one in his favour at first sight, his perfect manners and his gentleness win over even those who start with a prejudice or grudge against him. He has courage, as he has shown in more than one conjuncture : he is an experienced soldier, and plans a campaign to admiration. So far his good qualities. Now for the weak points which if I am not mistaken I have found in him. The Duke is a profound dissembler, all the more dangerous that his manner and his words give the impression of frankness itself. His ambition knows no bounds, and an avarice which I can only call sordid, guides his entire conduct. If he has courage—and of this there is no question, whatever may be said by those who envy or hate him—he certainly wants that firmness of soul which makes the true Hero. Sometimes, on the eve of an action, he is irresolute, or worse ; he will not face difficulties, and occasionally lets reverses cast him down : of this I could adduce more than one instance as an eye-witness. Yet I saw nothing of the kind either at Ramillies or Malplaquet,² so it may be that some constitutional weakness, unfitting him to support fatigue, has something to do with it. He does not know much of discipline, and gives too much rein to his men, who have now and then indulged in frightful excesses.³ Moreover he lacks the precise knowledge of military detail which

¹ Sicco van Goslinga, *Mémoires*, pp. 42-44, *sub* 1707.

² Goslinga was at Oudenarde, but not at Blenheim.

³ This is contrary to all the evidence, it being usually accepted that Marlborough's camps were the best governed in Europe.

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a Commander-in-Chief should possess. But these defects are light in the scale against the rare gifts of this truly great man.

We may supplement this by the picture which is the frontispiece of this volume. Of the many contemporary portraits of the Duke it is the most attractive. It is difficult to believe that he could have been more than forty when it was painted. Yet he did not receive the Garter nor wield the baton of a Commander-in-Chief till he was fifty. Certainly there are disarming qualities in this beautiful countenance—strangely feminine, for so virile a nature, in its delicacy and charm. We cannot look into what Macaulay has called his “cold, sad eyes,” which were actually a grey-green, but the comprehending, appraising, slightly mocking expression of the lips and nostrils—indeed, of the whole face—the symmetry of the features, and the sense of Olympian calm, linger with us, and offer their own explanation of the influence he exerted upon all with whom he came in contact.

The picture of Sarah on the opposite page has a well-known story attached to it. One day in passionate disagreement with her husband she determined to cut off the long hair which he so much admired.

. . . Instantly the deed was done. She cropped them short and laid them in an antechamber he must pass through to enter her apartments. To her cruel disappointment, he passed, entered, and repassed cool enough to provoke a saint; neither angry or sorrowful: seemingly quite unconscious of his crime and his punishment. Concluding he must have overlooked the hair she ran to secure it. Lo! it had vanished. And she remained in great perplexity the rest of the day. The next as he continued silent, and her looking glass spoke the change a rueful one, she began for once to think she had done a foolish thing. . . .

It was only after his death that she discovered them in the secret cabinet where he kept his greatest personal treasures.

We owe this record to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,¹ who was a young friend of the Duchess in her old age.

¹ Montagu, *Letters and Works*, i, 78.



SARAH AT HER TOILET

Sir Godfrey Kneller

This portrait shows the Duchess when she had cut off her hair in a temper.

By permission of Earl Spencer

AVARICE AND CHARM

When Sarah reached the end of her story, which she was accustomed to tell to her intimates, she broke down and wept. Kneller's portrait shows her still in her heyday, but with a very rueful countenance, and her severed hair hanging over her shoulder.¹

It will be observed that Goslinga contradicts Seward's assertion that Marlborough had "a very squeaking voice." This appears to be founded only upon some lines which Pope composed about him at the time of the death of his only surviving son, Lord Churchill, "in which," says Seward, "malignantly enough he makes him 'in accents of a whining ghost . . . lament the son he lost.'" The fragment incidentally illuminates the bitter malice of the politics of those days. A poet who mocks the grief of a father bewailing the death of his son places himself at once and for all time in a certain category definitely recognizable.

Sarah's remarks about her husband's probity raise a question on which we feel on more confident ground. There is no doubt that Marlborough took from the various offices which he held everything to which he was entitled either by warrant or recognized custom. But no one has ever been able to prove that he took more. The House of Commons was vigilant in those days, and charges of corruption and peculation were constant features of its debates. Danby's second and final disgrace in 1695 is a remarkable instance of the zeal and fearlessness with which Parliament discharged its duties. Both Churchill's brothers, George and Charles, were in a single year sent for a while to the Tower for financial irregularities and abuses, and there are numerous other cases on record. No one was more jealously watched than Marlborough. He had numerous enemies. As he was never a strong party man, he had not the protection which others enjoyed. Yet, although allegations, gossip, and slander pursued him, as they did most prominent people, no charge was ever brought against him till the famous charges of 1712, and these were, as will be seen in due course, completely exploded. It might be supposed

¹ It is apparent from the picture that the hair has been actually cut through. There is also a sketch by Kneller which shows her with her hair cropped.

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that a man who was known to be poor and fond of money, and who was for a long period viewed with extreme hostility by the King and by powerful people at Court, would, if his misconduct was flagrant, as is alleged, have certainly been called to account. In that ruthless age he was the last man to receive exceptional licence.

But the scrutiny of history has proved equally sterile. When we remember all the masterly and malevolent pens that have scratched among the records of the past in search of every scrap of information which could render him odious to posterity, it is impressive that nothing but contemporary gossip and rumour should have rewarded so much diligence.

His assailants have had to make the best of what slanders they could extract from the most disreputable sources. "The applauses which were justly due," says Macaulay,

to his conduct at Walcourt could not altogether drown the voices of those who muttered that, wherever a broad piece was to be saved or got, this hero was a mere Euclio, a mere Harpagon; that, though he drew a large allowance under pretence of keeping a public table, he never asked an officer to dinner; that his muster-rolls were fraudulently made up; that he pocketed pay in the names of men who had long been dead, of men *who had been killed in his own sight* four years before at Sedgemoor; that there were twenty such names in one troop; that there were thirty-six in another.

To this the sprightly Paget has rejoined:

As *L'Avare* was first acted in 1667, it is certainly possible that the Jacobites may have applied to the great object of their hatred the name of Harpagon; but as Pope was not born until 1688, the voices "muttering that Marlborough was a mere Euclio" which had to be drowned in 1689, must have been confined to the readers of the *Aulularia* of Plautus. . . .¹

Macaulay admits that the only authority for this poisonous paragraph is *The Dear Bargain*, a Jacobite pamphlet clandestinely printed in 1690.² He copied from *The Dear Bargain* almost word for word the passage quoted above and paused

¹ Macaulay, iii, 438. Paget, *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 12.

² *Somers Tracts*, x, 349.

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only to add a few picturesque and unwarranted flourishes of his own.¹ *The Dear Bargain* is a long tirade of virulent abuse primarily directed against William and Mary in which Marlborough is only incidentally insulted. We know Macaulay's opinion of Jacobite pamphlets and pamphleteers in so far as they attack the characters whose virtues he had determined to extol. Nothing can exceed the vehemence of the scorn which he poured upon these "habitual liars." Yet he does not hesitate to found his charges against Marlborough upon the very same evidence which he throws aside disdainfully when it accuses William of "abominations as foul as those which lie buried under the waters of the Dead Sea."² His principle is simple and convenient; Jacobite pamphleteers are worthy of credence only when they attack Marlborough.

It is certainly odd that Macaulay in the passage quoted above should censure Marlborough because, "though he drew a large allowance under pretence of keeping a public table, he never asked an officer to dinner." We have little doubt that Marlborough economized on all his public allowances; but the criticism comes ill from Macaulay. He has confessed that he accepted a seat on the Supreme Council of India in 1843 mainly in order to accumulate a fortune, and he managed to save annually the greater part of his salary of £10,000 by living below the style expected in the East from officers of the highest rank. We do not blame Macaulay for his thrift. It was indeed important to our country that his closing years should have been freed from financial embarrassment. But that he of all men should feel able to cast this particular reproach at Marlborough shows some obliquity of vision.

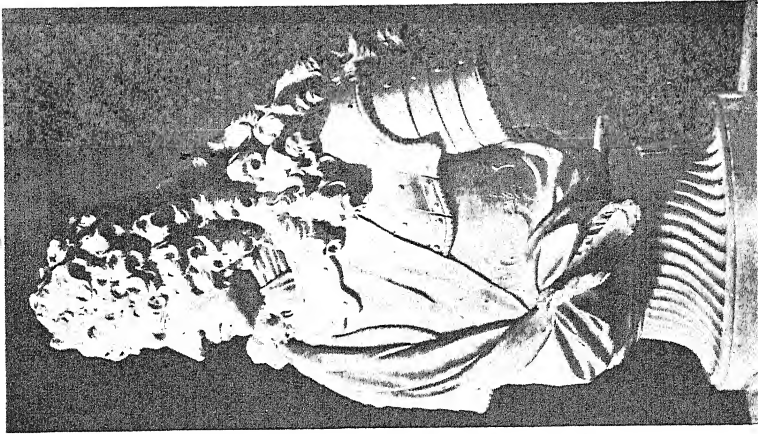
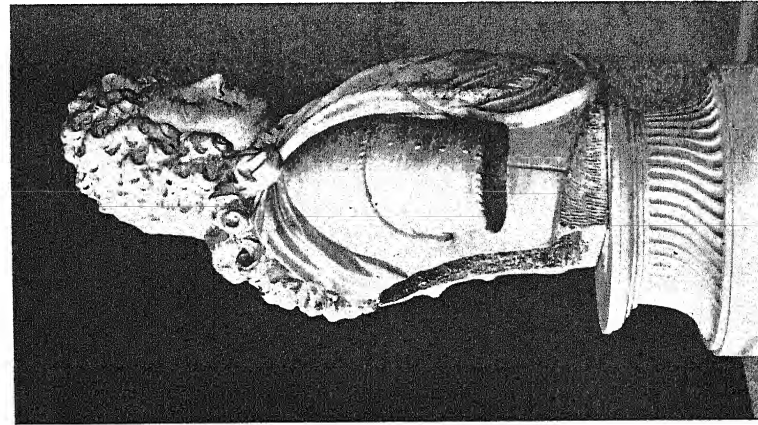
It is probably a just conclusion that Marlborough's conduct was above and not below the standards of his time; that though he took all the emoluments, perquisites, and commissions which belonged to his offices and appointments, he never took bribes or any money that was not his by usage or

¹ See author's italics in the passage quoted above from Macaulay.

² *History*, iv, 559.

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law. Although he always recognized the claims of natural love and affection, as in choosing his wife, in helping his father, or providing for his children, and set these far above riches, his own deep-rooted habits of personal thrift and self-denial were carried to a point which drew upon him the mockery of his envious contemporaries and of malicious historians. Yet these same habits, unpleasing though they may seem, were an essential part of his character as a gatherer, as a builder and a founder. They were mitigated or often baffled by the pervasive kindness of his nature. They arose from the same methodical, patient, matter-of-fact spade-work which characterizes all his conduct of war, and formed the only basis upon which the great actions for which he is renowned could have sprung. His handling of his private affairs was as grave, as strongly marked by common sense, and as free from indulgence or unwisdom as his conduct of politics and war. His private fortune was amassed upon the same principles as marked the staff-work of his campaigns, and was a part of the same design. It was only in love or on the battlefield that he took all risks. In these supreme exaltations he was swept from his system and rule of living, and blazed resplendent with the heroic virtues. In his marriage and in his victories the worldly prudence, the calculation, the reinsurance, which regulated his ordinary life and sustained his strategy, fell from him like a too heavily embroidered cloak, and the genius within sprang forth in sure and triumphant command.



BUST OF MARLBOROUGH

J. M. Rysbrack

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

CHAPTER XXIX

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

(1696-1698)

IN its eighth year the so-called War of the League of Augsburg came to an inconclusive end. The Maritime Powers and Germany had defended themselves successfully, but were weary of the barren struggle. Spain was bellicose, but useless. After the withdrawal of the English fleet from the Mediterranean the Duke of Savoy made peace with France, and the Emperor and the King of Spain were constrained to accept the neutralization of Italy. Only the Emperor, with his eyes fixed on the ever-impending vacancy of the Spanish throne, was earnest to keep the anti-French confederacy in being. But this same reason dictated an opposite policy to France. Louis had no mind to see the Spanish empires in the Old and New World become the prize which should inspire all the banded enemies of France with renewed comradeship and ardour. He understood the numerous strains which were rending the Grand Alliance. He saw that it was falling to pieces under the pressure of so many fruitless campaigns. Once resolved into its component parts, the reconstitution of so ponderous and complicated an engine might well be impossible. He believed that no hand but William's could reassemble it; and how long would William last? Peace would dissolve the hostile coalition. Many of its members would lay aside their panoply and go their several ways disarmed. But the great central Power which had hitherto withstood them all, albeit narrowly, would under his absolute sovereignty refit her armies, revive her strength, and pursue her aims better at the moment by peace than by war. Moreover, the long struggle against all Europe had seriously affected the strength of the French nation. Louis therefore at the end of 1696 made overtures of peace to

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William. It gradually became clear that France would restore all her conquests in the Low Countries and on the Rhine made since the Peace of Nimwegen except only Strasburg ; and for Strasburg she would give an ample substitute.

William, with his lifelong knowledge of Europe, comprehended perfectly the meaning of these proposals. But the pressure for peace, especially in England, convinced him that he had not the power to reject them. The negotiations, opened under Swedish mediation at Ryswick, were protracted. The French, who had been able to draw fifty thousand of their troops from the Italian theatre for the northern front, were in no hurry to close the campaign. The differences between the allies, an elaborate ceremonial, and the necessary adjustments of points of dignity and honour occupied the rest of 1697. The Emperor, who wanted Strasburg, protested strongly. Considering, however, that he had himself made a separate agreement neutralizing the Italian front and liberating the French army operating there, his position was not morally strong. The Spaniards were tamed by disasters at Barcelona and at Cartagena, in the Indies. The English Parliament clamoured for a settlement.

It was not till October 1697 that the group of treaties bringing back peace to the whole world was completed. Apart from the territorial arrangements, Louis agreed tacitly and under curious reserves to recognize William as King of the three kingdoms. He refused to abandon James II by name, but he contracted not to support any enemies of England, adding the words "without any exception," which, since they covered the Prince of Wales as well as the exiled King, were by no means unacceptable. He also withdrew his demand that the mass of the Jacobite refugees apart from the Royal Family should return under an amnesty to their native land. He restored the principality of Orange to its redoubtable owner, stipulating only that no French Huguenots should reside there. William on his part abated his claim that James and his Court should leave French soil, and by a provision which casts a revealing light upon the cool mood of the times undertook to pay to Mary of Modena a jointure

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ultimately fixed at £50,000 a year. Thus all the polite society of Europe bowed and scraped amicably to one another, and all its harassed peoples rested from their painful strife.

The five-year interlude between the first nine and the last ten years of this world war is commonly viewed as a mere truce. In fact, however, the situation after the Treaty of Ryswick contained many elements of peace. Certainly all its signatories sincerely hoped to accomplish their aims without further resort to arms. All were weary of costly and desultory strife. The great antagonisms of Europe remained; the perils of the Spanish succession impended; but there was an earnest resolve, shared in various degrees by sovereigns, Governments, and peoples, to exhaust every method of diplomacy and bargaining before again drawing the sword. The Peace of Ryswick left in Europe two great figures instead of one. Louis XIV recognized in William III almost an equal. The Great Monarch, for all his splendid armies and centralized despotic power, could not disdain the royal statesman and soldier who stood at the head of the Maritime Powers, and spoke on many issues in the name of the larger part of Europe. Nicely chosen terms of honour were interchanged between them. William expressed his "veneration and admiration" for Louis, and Louis his "high respect" for William. "He [William] may nevertheless rest assured," the French King had written at the outset of the peace negotiations,

that I could not see him at the head of so powerful a League as that which has been formed against me, without having that esteem for him which the deference that the principal Powers of Europe have for his opinion seems to demand; and that even his perseverance in the alliances contrary to my interests, gives me reason to believe that those which the good of Europe now requires me to contract with him will be equally durable.¹

Both potentates yielded themselves for a space to the sensation that together with goodwill they could settle the problems of Europe and give repose to Christendom. Splendid

¹ Louis XIV to Boufflers, July 12, 1697; P. Grimblot, *Letters of William III and Louis XIV*, i, 20.

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embassages made their reciprocal entries with pomp and glitter into the two capitals. The style and magnificence of Portland's arrival in Paris was matched by that of the French Ambassador, the Comte de Tallard, at the Court of St James's. Tallard commands a special interest in our story. He, like Villars, was one of those soldier-diplomatists whom France has several times used in her great periods of power. His military reputation stood high. Saint-Simon thought him a contemptible diplomatist; but he certainly possessed a keen intelligence and an exceptional knowledge of affairs. His letters and reports to the French Government, like those of Courtin and Barillon under Charles II and James II, now open again to us that window upon the past which William's wars had closed.

Three great international settlements were sought by William in harmony with Louis. The first of these was the Treaty of Carlowitz, negotiated in 1699 by English mediation and impulsion between the Holy Roman Empire and the Sublime Porte. Here for the first time the plenipotentiaries of many European states held united parley with the Turk. The removal, at least for a time, of the deadly menace to Vienna revived the strength of the Empire and notably restored the balance of Europe. In the north a dangerous dispute between Denmark and Holstein, threatening to involve the greatest Powers, was laid to rest in 1700 by the Treaty of Travendahl. In this again William, using, with French acquiescence, the Dutch fleet to carry Charles XII of Sweden into Denmark, played a decisive part. Both these instruments augmented the fame and authority of King William, and placed him in a position of advantage to negotiate in the deepest secrecy with Louis upon the gravest matter of all—the destiny of the Spanish Empire when its monarch, whose death was always likely or imminent, should expire. It will be more convenient to the reader if we reserve the discussion of this First Partition Treaty for a later chapter.

Although the Peace of Ryswick had left the power of France intact, it marked the most solid check that Louis had yet sustained. William was now at the height of his glory.

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He seemed about to outshine even the Sun King himself. In the east, in the north, and now in the south and west of Europe he seemed about to lay, after generations of religious, dynastic, and territorial wars, the foundations of a lasting peace for the whole world. But at this very moment when all that the hearts of men desired was coming within their reach through his exertions, he was woefully and even fatally weakened by the action of the House of Commons. To deal with Louis XIV as an equal—the only key to safety—it was imperative that he should be strong. Not only must he marshal all his influence in Europe, not only must he wield the overwhelming sea-power of England and Holland, but he must have at his back a considerable British Army.

Very different were the mood and outlook of the Tory country gentlemen and Whig doctrinaires who assembled at Westminster. The wars were over; their repressions were at an end. They rejoiced in peace and clamoured for freedom. The dangers were past; why should they ever return? Groaning under taxation, impatient of every restraint, the Commons plunged into a career of economy, disarmament, and constitutional assertiveness which was speedily followed by the greatest of the wars England had ever waged and the heaviest expenditure she had ever borne. This phase has often recurred in our history. In fact, it has been an invariable rule that England, so steadfast in war, so indomitable in peril, should at the moment when the dire pressures are relaxed and victory has been won cast away its fruits. Having made every sacrifice, having performed prodigies of strength and valour, our countrymen under every franchise or party have always fallen upon the ground in weakness and futility when a very little more perseverance would have made them supreme, or at least secure. Now after Ryswick, as at Utrecht, as at Paris in 1763, as after the Napoleonic wars and Waterloo, and as after Armageddon, the island mainspring of the life and peace of Europe broke; and England, amid a babel of voices, dissolved in faction, disbanded her armies, and sought to repay the spites and hardships of war-time upon the men who had carried her through.

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She was, indeed, though she could not know it, in an interval between two deadly wars. The conflict of Tories and Whigs raged at a furious height; and to this bitter feud was added the burning constitutional issue in which both parties co-operated, and from which the modern polity of England was to emerge. Beyond all was the national danger by which, late but surely, all other passions would be over-ridden. There were therefore three separate tensions, each simultaneously reacting upon the other.

England came out of the war with an army of eighty-seven thousand regular soldiers. The King considered that thirty thousand men and a large additional number of officers was the least that would guarantee the public safety and interest. His Ministers, in contact with Parliament, did not dare propose more than ten thousand, and the House of Commons would only vote seven thousand. Sunderland, with his record, felt himself in no condition to face such a storm. He had ventured to emerge into open power as Lord Chamberlain. He deemed it expedient to retire again behind the scenes; and the King could not persuade him to remain. He understood the forces at work better than his master. The Navy underwent a less severe compression. The picture is complicated by a considerable garrison which all admitted must be kept in Ireland, by two thousand men in the West Indies, and by three thousand marines borne as sailors, though actually infantry. A new Parliament only reiterated more stridently the demands of its predecessor. Its Members had vowed on the hustings that they would cut the expenses to the bone and break up the standing army. They ingeminated economy. The reductions were carried out in the most brutal manner, the war-bitten veterans and the Huguenot refugees who had fought so well being summarily flung on the streets and treated as rogues and vagabonds on the first provocation. The process was only tempered by the half-pay granted to the officers as a retaining fee, and delayed by the inability of Parliament to pay the arrears due to the men before discharge. An orgy of

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insult and abuse in which all classes of the civil population heartily joined began around all uniformed men, the half-pay officers, and especially those who had already been disarmed and turned adrift and had no means of support. The roads and countryside became infested with desperate, starving footpads who had lately grappled with the French Guard and shed their blood for King and country. The days of Robin Hood returned, and what was left of the English cavalry was largely occupied in hunting down their old comrades-in-arms now driven into outlawry. The gibbet and the lash were meted out with ruthless vigour on all who fell into the clutches of the law. Such was the process of demobilization in the seventeenth century.

A new and in many ways a singularly modern figure whom every one nowadays can understand had appeared in the House of Commons.¹ Robert Harley was born and bred in a Puritan family and atmosphere a Whig and a Dissenter. He was educated for the Bar, though never called to it. Elected for the borough of New Radnor in 1690, he speedily became a master of Parliamentary tactics and procedure. He understood, we are assured, the art of 'lengthening out' the debates, of 'perplexing' the issues, and of taking up and exploiting popular cries. In the process of opposing the Court he gradually transformed himself from Whig to Tory and from Dissenter to High Churchman, so that eventually he became the chief of the Tories both in Church and State. Already in 1698 he had become virtually their leader in the House of Commons. He it was who conducted the reckless movement for the reduction of the armed forces. He it was who sought to rival the Bank of England with the Land Bank. But although his speeches gave entire satisfaction to the vain crowd he led, he himself took longer views and dreamed of a day when he would play the game of politics on a stage more brightly lit than Westminster. He appealed to moderate opinion even when heading the attack. He kept in touch with the Whigs, while delighting the Tories. He made the Court feel that, though he was

¹ Cf. E. S. Roscoe, *Robert Harley* (1902); Burnet, iv, 197.

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their most serious enemy, he might also some day, perhaps, become their best friend.

Behind Harley, Seymour, the pre-eminent 'sham good-fellow' of the age, cheered on his West Country pack with all the zest of a huntsman on a good scenting day. The Tory squires roared about the expense of useless and insolent popinjays; and the Whigs joined them in descanting upon the menace to freedom inherent in a standing army. The King was aghast at these furious manifestations. His heart bled for the officers and men with whom he had marched and fought during the long, sombre campaigns. Every fibre in his nature revolted at the baseness, cruelty, and ingratitude with which his faithful troops were treated, and at the same time he felt his whole European position undermined by the blotting out of England as a military factor. But he was powerless. Moreover, it was resolved that such troops as must perforce be retained should not comprise a single foreigner. The Dutch Guards must forthwith quit the island. Accordingly this well-trained, devoted brigade began its march to the coast. The Commons rejected the King's final appeal for their retention, though he wrote his message throughout in his own hand. When in his Speeches from the Throne he suggested that the country was being endangered, haughty demands were made in the Commons for the names of the Ministers who had dared to counsel him to address them in such terms.

Can we wonder that the unhappy prince, insulted in the hour of his greatest triumph, hamstrung in the full stride of his most beneficent activity, outraged in his honour and comradeship as a soldier, wished to quit the insensate and ungrateful people whose religion, whose institutions he had preserved, and whose fame he had lifted so high? He would abandon the odious and intractable race. He would retort their hatred of foreigners with a gesture of inexpressible scorn. Europe might clatter again into confusion so that insular ignorance should reap its harvest. That he mastered these emotions is a measure of his quality. It was the hardest of his victories, and without it his life's work must have perished. Yet if

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we reflect on his many faults in tact, in conduct, and in fairness in the earlier days of his reign, the unwarrantable favours he had lavished on his Dutchmen, the injustices done to English commanders, Count Solms' maltreatment of the English troops at Steinkirk, his uncomprehending distaste for the people of his new realm, their relegation to be mere pawns on his Continental chess-board—anyone can feel that all the blame was not on one side. His present anguish paid his debts of former years. As for the English, they were only too soon to redeem their follies in blood and toil.

Few features in Marlborough's long life are more remarkable than the manner in which he steadily grew in weight and influence through the whole of the six years when he was banished from favour and office. The Whigs were jealous of Shrewsbury's honour, and the Tories felt a strong interest in Godolphin. But Marlborough had no party to take care of him, and he alone bore the weight of the royal displeasure. He took a regular share in the business of the House of Lords. Apart from the attainting of Fenwick, he preserved a conciliatory attitude towards the Jacobites. He remained the trusted friend of the Princess Anne. For the rest he lived in tranquil retirement, seeming not to fret at the great war-opportunities which were slipping away, or at the years of his prime which were being consumed. He was happy with Sarah and his children, and his equanimity was perfect. He rarely wrote letters, except to Sarah when he was parted from her, or on public business when he was employed. We have, therefore, only the scantiest records of his daily life during these years or of his public actions. Still he grew, and at the end of this lengthy period of eclipse was felt by every one around the summit of affairs to be one of the greatest Englishmen of the day.

William was very slow in resuming relations with him. After the death of Queen Mary in 1694 he had been readmitted to the Court, but to no employment. At last, however, the barrier fell to pieces. Anne's eldest son, the Duke of Gloucester, was now nine years old. It was thought

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fitting to provide the future heir-apparent to the Crown with a governor of high consequence and an establishment of his own. Parliament in voting the King a Civil List of £700,000 a year had foreseen such an arrangement. William's first thoughts turned to Shrewsbury, who was still brooding in the country and constantly asking to be relieved of his office. He had, as we have seen, more than once pressed Marlborough's claims upon the King. He now declined the appointment for which his friend seemed the obvious choice. Nothing could be more agreeable to the young Prince's parents. Still the King hesitated, and a current of Tory opinion brought Rochester's name forward. Sunderland seems to have exerted his still potent influence in Marlborough's favour.

It may well have been, however, that a new associate of Marlborough's carried the greatest weight. William had become deeply attached to the young Dutch courtier Keppel. He had advanced him in a few years from being a page to a commanding position in the State. He had newly created him Earl of Albemarle. There was an affinity between them—honourable, but subtle and unusual. The lonely, childless monarch treated Keppel as if he were a well-beloved adopted son. The King's old faithful intimate, Portland, had long been Marlborough's enemy. He had not perhaps forgotten a description of him as "a wooden fellow." But Portland was now on his embassy in Paris, and Keppel had supplanted him in the King's heart. The rivalry between these two Dutchmen was hot. In fact, Portland was soon to cast off all his offices for a ludicrous cause. Keppel in his absence abroad had installed himself at Newmarket in the rooms next to the royal apartments which Portland had long occupied; and William would not eject him. It sufficed that Portland was Marlborough's enemy for Keppel to become his advocate. Thus those obstacles against which merit and policy had so long pressed in vain were smoothly removed by the deft and tactful addresses of a youthful counsellor.

In the summer of 1698 William invited Marlborough to be governor of the boy Prince. When he kissed hands upon



CHILDREN OF JOHN, EARL OF MARLBOROUGH

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

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his appointment William uttered the gracious but discriminating words, "My lord, teach him but to know [?be] what you are, and my nephew cannot want for accomplishments."¹ At the same time Marlborough was restored to his rank in the Army and to the Privy Council. The King announced his decision in remarkable terms in the *Gazette* of June 16, 1698 :

His Majesty has been pleased to appoint the Right Honourable the Earl of Marlborough to be Governor of His Highness the Duke of Gloucester, as a mark of the good opinion His Majesty has of his lordship's zeal for his service and his qualifications for the employment of so great a trust. . . .

The miniature Court of the Duke of Gloucester was formed with expedition in the summer of 1698.² His parents and the Marlboroughs had their own ideas about its composition. The King shied at their clear-cut plans. "The Princess Anne," he exclaimed petulantly, on the eve of sailing to The Hague, "should not be Queen before her time." Marlborough made no difficulties. He sought only to know the royal pleasure ; and Keppel, who was inseparable from his master, promised to guide it into proper channels. In the end the list was accepted very much as it had been planned. William had chosen Bishop Burnet to be the young Prince's spiritual guide, and in addition to educate him in history, politics, and the lesser arts. A Tory governor must be balanced by a Whig preceptor. William may also have been glad to get Burnet, "the blabbing Bishop," of whom he was tired, out of his way. However, Marlborough and Burnet became close friends. The Bishop yielded himself to the charm and courtesy of his chief. He fell so much under his attraction that he even rewrote the passages in his history dealing with Churchill's desertion of James. Improvidently he forgot to destroy the original version, which has been unearthed to his posthumous mockery. Lord Churchill, Marlborough's only surviving son, aged twelve, was appointed Master of the Horse and no doubt 'playmate in

¹ The sole authority for this remark is *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*.

² See the "Establishment of the Duke of Gloucester's Family," August [?] 1697 [?] 8], in *C.S.P. (Domestic)*, 1696-97, p. 343 ; also two letters of Marlborough to Burnet in the Bodleian (Add. MSS., A. 291).

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chief.' A son of Bishop Burnet became a page, and an impoverished gentlewoman named Hill was put in charge of the laundry.

Among fleeting shadows the name of Hill is significant. In 1689, shortly after the Revolution, Sarah discovered that she had poor relations. Her grandfather, Sir John Jennings, had produced no fewer than twenty-two children. His estate, though substantial, could not bear such subdivision. One of his daughters, with hardly £500 for her dowry, had married a Levant merchant named Hill. Having prospered for some years, he was ultimately ruined by speculation, or what Sarah called "turning projector." "But as this was long before I was born," writes Sarah in a passage of perfect literary malice, all the more piquant because published in the lifetime of many of those to whom it refers,

I never knew there were such people in the world, till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cockpit ; at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me and said, she believed I did not know that I had relations who were in want, and she gave me an account of them. When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never heard before of any such relations, and immediately gave her out of my purse ten guineas for their present relief, saying, I would do what I could for them. Afterwards I sent Mrs Hill more money, and saw her. She told me that her husband was in the same relation to Mr Harley, as she was to me,¹ but that he had never done any thing for her.²

When Mr and Mrs Hill died they left four children, two sons and two daughters.

The elder daughter [Abigail] . . . was a grown woman. I took her to St Albans, where she lived with me and my children, and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister. . . . As for the younger daughter (who is still living) I engaged my Lord Marlborough, when the Duke of Gloucester's family was settled, to make her laundress to him, which was a good provision for her. And when the Duke of Gloucester died, I obtained for her a pension of £200 a year, which I paid her out

¹ *I.e.*, uncle and aunt.

² *Conduct*, pp. 177-181.

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of the Privy Purse. . . . The Queen was pleased to allow the money for that purchase [an annuity] and it is very probable that Mrs Hill has the annuity to this day, and perhaps nothing else, unless she saved money after her sister had made her Deputy to the Privy Purse, which she did as soon as she had supplanted me.

The elder son was at my request put by my Lord Godolphin into a place in the custom-house; and when, in order to his advancement to a better, it was necessary to give security for his good behaviour, I got a relation of the Duke of Marlborough's to be bound for him in two thousand pounds.

His brother (whom the bottle-men afterwards called "honest Jack Hill") was a tall boy whom I clothed (for he was all in rags) and put to school at St Albans. . . . After he had learnt what he could there, a vacancy happening of Page of Honour to the Prince of Denmark, his Highness was pleased at my request to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester. And though my Lord always said that Jack Hill was good for nothing, yet to oblige me he made him his aide-de-camp and afterwards gave him a regiment. But it was his sister's interest that raised him to be a General and to command in that ever memorable expedition to Quebec; I had no share in doing him these honours. To finish what I have to say upon this subject:—when Mr Harley thought it useful to attack the Duke of Marlborough in Parliament, this Quebec General, this honest Jack Hill, this once ragged boy whom I clothed, happening to be sick in bed, was nevertheless persuaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself in warmer clothes than those I had given him, and go to the House to vote against the Duke.

Here, then, is a succinct account of the Abigail Hill who afterwards, as Mrs Masham and Harley's confidante, saved France from destruction as surely, though scarcely as gloriously, as Joan of Arc. It was an annoyance of peculiar rankle to Sarah to the end of her long life that she, by indulging her most generous sentiments of compassion, should have prepared her own undoing and her husband's fall at the moment when the consummation of all his victories and toils seemed so near. In her strong, domineering, bustling life Sarah did many actions both bad and good, but her charity

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to the Hills was her special benevolence. She was, indeed, for many years their patron saint. Nepotism apart, her kindness to them shines brightly. Yet this was one of the traceable causes of her catastrophe.

Thus we see Marlborough picking his steps warily and with foresight through all the perplexities and hazards of the times, while at the same time his devoted wife by one of the best deeds in her life sets in train, all unwitting, the series of events which amid his glories shall lay him low.

The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.

It is a classic instance of how far romance lags behind reality.

CHAPTER XXX

MARLBOROUGH IN POLITICS

(1698-1700)

MEANWHILE Marlborough's family had grown up, and in the years 1698 and 1699 his two eldest daughters both married. The eldest, Henrietta, became engaged to Francis, Lord Godolphin's son. The lifelong friendship between both the Marlboroughs and Godolphin is a factor in history ; but this was no marriage of political or worldly calculation. It was a love-match between very young people—Francis was only twenty and Henrietta eighteen—who were thrown together by the intimacies of their parents, to whom it gave the keenest pleasure. Godolphin's wife had died after giving birth to Francis a generation earlier. The Treasurer was too deeply attached to her memory ever to marry again. He lived for his work, his sport, and his only child, a graceful youth of more charm than force. In that corrupt age, when public office was almost the only road to riches, Godolphin was for more than thirty years and in four reigns in control of the national finances. He was, however, a man of stainless integrity in money matters. At his death in 1712 he left but £14,000, somewhat less than what he had inherited forty years before. He could therefore at this time give only the smallest competence to his son. But the fabulous avarice of John and Sarah seems to have slumbered on this occasion, as it had when they themselves plighted their penniless troth. Marlborough's notorious greed for lucre had so far left him at forty-five the poorest of his rank. Nevertheless he provided a dowry of £5,000. The Princess Anne, whose enthusiasm was kindled by this cementing of friendship in her circle, wished to bestow £10,000 upon the young couple. But the Marlboroughs, no doubt from some base motive, would only accept £5,000. The marriage took

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place on March 24, 1698. The bride was beautiful and accomplished. Her graces were the theme for the rhymesters of the day. The union was lasting.

The marriage of Marlborough's second daughter, Anne, in January 1700, was an event of greater importance. We have seen how long and varied had been the relations of Marlborough and Sunderland and the political association that had always subsisted between them. A close friendship had grown between their wives. Indeed, there is a letter of Princess Anne's to Sarah which shows that her jealousy was playfully excited by their intimacy.

I cannot help envying Lady Sunderland to-day that she should have the satisfaction of seeing you before me, for I am sure she cannot love you half so well as I do, though I know that she has the art of saying a great deal.

Sunderland's heir, Lord Spencer, who was a widower, was a remarkable personality. He had none of the insinuating charm and genial courtesy of his incomprehensible father. He was an ultra-Whig of the straitest and most unbending type. He did not trouble to conceal his republican opinions. He was so conscious of the rights of his order and of Parliament against the Crown that he had little sympathy left for the commonalty. According to his philosophy, citizens of the worst republic were free, while subjects of the best king were slaves. He was a keen book-lover, and the Sunderland Library remained for many generations his monument. The Whig Party took a lively interest in the development of his mind. It was thought that experience would mellow his orthodox severity, and they already saluted him as the future champion of the cause for which "Hampden had died in the field and Sidney on the scaffold."

Sarah, that sturdy Whig, may have shared these hopes; but Marlborough's temperamental Toryism was repulsed by the harshness alike of Lord Spencer's doctrine and disposition. Anne was his favourite daughter, and by every account was a brilliant and fascinating creature. Intimate and subtle as were his relations with Sunderland in State



HENRIETTA CHURCHILL
By permission of the Duke of Marlborough



ANNE CHURCHILL
By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

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affairs, important as were the reciprocal services which might be rendered, magnificent as was the inheritance, he was disinclined to mingle that wayward blood with his own, or to countenance a marriage which might not bring his daughter happiness. He was therefore very hard to persuade. However, he gradually yielded to Sarah's persuasions, and, being at length convinced of Lord Spencer's sincerity, he finally consented. Once again Princess Anne, who was the girl's godmother, matched the family dowry with a gift of £5000. Sunderland, who seems to have longed for the marriage, wrote in a remarkable letter :

If I see him so settled I shall desire nothing more in this world but to die in peace if it please God. I must add this that if he can be thus happy he will be governed in everything public and private by my lord Marlborough. I have particularly talked to him of that and he is sensible how advantageous it will be to him to be so. I need not I am sure desire that all this may be a secret to everybody but Lady Marlborough.¹

These expectations were not fulfilled, and Spencer's personality and conduct were to become after his father's death a cause of serious political embarrassment. It is, however, by this marriage that the Marlborough blood, titles, and estates have descended to posterity, for his only surviving son, Lord Churchill, Master of the Horse in the Duke of Gloucester's household, had almost as short a span to live as the little Prince he served.

With the coming of peace, many Englishmen of quality visited Paris, and contact with the Jacobite Court was frequent and open. According to the Nairne Papers, Marlborough was still expressing to the Jacobite agents his willingness to restore James II.² Nothing is more inherently improbable. Nothing was more contrary to his interests. On the other hand, the real character of his connexion with Saint-Germains at this time was far more obvious and natural. After her husband's death in 1693 the Duchess of Tyrconnel,

¹ Lord Sunderland to Mrs Boscawen, December 31, 1698, Blenheim MSS.

² Macpherson, i, 588.

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the once radiant Frances, had secured a small pension from the French Government, and passed her time either in France or in Flanders. But her heart was turned towards her native land. We find the Marlboroughs using their influence with the English Ministers to obtain permission for her return to Ireland. James Brydges, son of Lord Chandos and later Paymaster-General of the Forces, notes in his journal in May 1701 how "Lord and Lady Marlborough came to see me and left Lady Tyrconnell's petition."¹ They do not seem to have been successful, for it was not till 1707 or 1708 that she took up her abode in Dublin, where she founded a nunnery for "poor Clares" and lived to the verge of ninety.

There is a letter of Sarah's written to one of her uncles which discloses a minor intrigue, and also shows that feminine sentiment towards Customs regulations was much the same then as now :

I have sent you three dozen and three pairs of gloves, which I desire you will try to get the gentleman you said was going to France to carry with him. He will find no difficulty at the customs house here if his things are to be seen ; but in France those sort of things are forbid, and therefore I trouble you with them, because I can't send them as one does other goods that one may have in that country for paying for, but I conclude they are not so exact, but that a gentleman may carry any thing of that nature and they won't dispute it. They must be given to Madam Dumene, without naming my sister at all, and if it be as easy to you I believe it will be best not to name me to the gentleman you give 'em to, who I conclude you know enough to ask such a favour from, but if he won't undertake it I desire you would be pleased to let the gloves be sent again to my porter at St James's and I must try to find some other opportunity of sending them.

The ice of a long frost being broken, the King felt the comfort in his many troubles of Marlborough's serene, practical, adaptive personality, which no difficulties found without resource, which no dangers disturbed. In July 1698,

¹ Brydges' Journal, May 12, 1701, Huntington Library MSS.

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when the royal departure for Holland rendered a Council of Regency necessary, Marlborough was nominated one of the nine Lords Justices to exercise the sovereign power. From this time forth William seemed to turn increasingly, if without personal friendship, towards the man of whose aid he had deprived himself during the most critical years of his reign. He used in peace the soldier he had neglected in war; and Marlborough, though his prime bent was military, though stamped from his youth with the profession of arms, became in the closing years of the reign a shrewd and powerful politician.

This new relationship of William and Marlborough requires close examination. The King seemed speedily inclined to trust him implicitly and to make common cause with him in great matters. We have Somers' letter of December 29, 1698, to prove that in his grief and wrath upon the dismissal of the Dutch Guards he confided to Marlborough, although he was not in the Cabinet, his secret resolve, withheld from some of his Ministers, to abdicate the crown. "He has spoken of it to my Lord Marlborough (which one would wonder at almost as much as at ye thing itself), to Mr Montague, and to my Lord Orford, and, I believe to divers others."¹

We have no record of what Marlborough advised; but there can be little doubt he urged the King to abandon his design. William's abdication at such a juncture might as easily have been followed by a republic as by the accession of the Princess Anne. There was as yet no Act of Settlement. Parliament in its queer temper would have had no mind to exchange the direct rule of William for the indirect rule of Marlborough, a subject exposed to every jealousy. Only a normal succession upon a demise of the Crown could bring him power in a form worth having. He must surely have counselled upon the King the patience he practised himself. His comprehension of Europe at this time was second only to that of William. They both viewed its complex scene from the same angle. They assigned

¹ Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 573.

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similar values to its numerous factors. They both sought the same curbing of France through a European coalition animated and headed by the Maritime Powers. Marlborough saw the rashness and peril of English disarmament at such a juncture as clearly as the King, though he had none of those recent personal ties with the disbanded regiments, threatened Dutch Guards, and ill-treated Huguenot officers which made the process so poignant to his master. Lastly, both regarded with much detachment, both viewed with a distaste which it was politic to conceal, the violent passions and prejudices of the English political parties, and both were prone to use them alternately for their own purposes, which included also the greatest purposes of the age. Thus for the next two years, if he did not wholly trust Marlborough, William leaned on him. Marlborough felt the weight, and understood and discounted the cause. He did not give himself wholly to the King. The royal confidence was only half-confidence: the rest was the need of help. Hence he preserved his independence and carefully guarded the sources of his own personal power.

Lord Wolseley has not comprehended Marlborough's conduct during the closing years of William III. He is shocked to find his hero, although employed by the King in many great matters while war drew nearer, voting on all test party issues with the Tories in their savage faction fight. He wishes that he had cut himself adrift from narrow political associations and stood forth boldly at William's side, proclaiming the oncoming peril and urging all true Englishmen to unite together. He describes his course as "inexplicable" except on grounds of partisanship, and inexcusable in one who had so clear a view of Europe. In fact, however, the forces by which Marlborough was swayed and which he used are easy to discern.

If Marlborough had cut himself adrift from the Tory Party and become a mere adherent of the Court he would soon have lost all influence upon events. His own power would have been reduced to his own personal ability, while at the same time his usefulness to the King would have vanished. William



THE NINE LORDS JUSTICES OF ENGLAND, 1698
From a print in the British Museum

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knew England almost as well as he knew Europe, but he despised the ignoble strife of its parties, and underrated the factor of party as an element in his vast problem. In his embarrassments he would turn from Whig Ministers who could not manage and would not face the House of Commons to the turbulent Tories, only to find them ignorant of world facts and with a view of national interests which was at that time wrong-headed and utterly at variance with his own purposes. The Whigs at least saw what was coming, and would help him to meet it. Marlborough, who understood the public interest as clearly as his own, knew that the Whigs could never carry England through the approaching ordeal in the teeth of Tory opposition: he knew that the Tories were by far the strongest faction in the State. Except in the most general way he did not share their prejudices, but he knew their power and that the credit he had with them was one of the main foundations of his own position. He stood with Rochester and Godolphin midway between the King and the Tory Parliament. Of these three he alone shared William's European view; but his influence with Rochester was considerable, and with Godolphin paramount. They all toed the party line and voted the party ticket as much as was necessary to identify themselves markedly with Toryism. At the same time, animated by Marlborough, they laboured to draw their party to the King's view of the national interest and to draw the King to further reliance on the Tories, including themselves. Marlborough was in close friendly relations with Harley, and through him with the House of Commons. He wielded himself great influence in the House of Lords. Through Sunderland, now linked to him by the marriage of their children, and through Sarah, he was in contact with the Whigs. And always he stood by the Princess Anne, dominated and inspired her circle, and championed her interests, in which also the future lay.

These incomplete relationships were the King's own fault, and a misfortune to his reign. If in 1689 and 1690 William, with two kingdoms to govern and the diplomacy of half Europe in his hands, had treated Marlborough fairly and

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had not denied him his rightful opportunity upon the battlefields, he might have found that talisman of victory without which all his painstaking, adroit combinations and noble exertions could but achieve a mediocre result. He might have found across the differences of rank that same comradeship, never disturbed by doubt or jealousy, true to the supreme tests of war and fortune, which later shone between Marlborough and Eugene.

Two questions of domestic politics arose which illustrate Marlborough's independence of the Court. In 1689 the King, no doubt with Marlborough's aid, had persuaded Prince George of Denmark to give up, as a counter in a treaty of peace between Denmark and Sweden, his small hereditary lands in Denmark for a mortgage of £85,000. The general war being over, the time had now come to redeem this mortgage. The King, who had hitherto paid Prince George 6 per cent. upon the capital, was loath to disclose the transaction to Parliament. He knew it would raise a storm in the Commons, then in full economy cry. But Prince George insisted, and his rights were indisputable. It was only after extremely disagreeable debates, in which all Marlborough's influence was exerted first to have the matter brought forward and thereafter to have the claim settled, that the money was voted. Here was another evidence as plain as the dispute about the Princess Anne's grant, eight years earlier, that the Marlboroughs would not hesitate, if forced to the choice, to champion their old patrons against the King.

The second case raised wider issues. At the end of the Irish war enormous rebel estates had been forfeited to the Crown. At intervals during his reign William had bestowed them upon his Dutch and Huguenot generals and companions. Bentinck, Ginkel, Ruvigny, Zulestein, all now ennobled, had gained an immense spoil. The King had gone farther. He had rewarded mere favourites like young Keppel and his own mistress, Elizabeth Villiers, from the same source. It was computed, or at least alleged, that after much had been

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THE EARL OF SUNDERLAND
By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

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restored to pardoned rebels Crown lands worth one and a half millions had been distributed to private persons.

The King asserted his right in terms revived from the Plantagenets. The Commons dwelt upon the expense of the war, the public debt, and the calamitous taxes. They reclaimed on behalf of the nation all these granted Irish lands, and particularly those held by foreigners. They had not been able fully to disband the Army because they could not find the money to pay off the men. Here in these royal grants was the means. They would achieve a purpose odious to the King by a method more odious still, and by the repudiation of his bounty furnish the funds to deprive him of his Army. The conflict between a resolute House of Commons, conscious of its ever-growing power, and William's embarrassed, half-hearted Ministers could have but one ending. It was thought prudent that the intervention of the Lords upon the side of the Prerogative should not be pressed. Sunderland, still active and emollient behind the scenes, counselled submission. The title-deeds granted by the King were torn up, and all the captured lands were wrested from their new owners.

This controversy grievously embarrassed Marlborough. He had established dignified and self-respecting relations with the King. His influence with both Houses of Parliament was weighty. His character as a general officer seemed about to be merged in a political career. His appointment as a Minister was much rumoured. In February 1699 Vernon wrote to Shrewsbury :

Sir John Forbes tells me that he hears an exchange is negotiating, that Lord Marlborough should be Chamberlain and you Governor to the Duke of Gloucester [Shrewsbury had by now become Lord Chamberlain], but I hear nothing of it otherwise ; but I observe Lord Marlborough is frequently with the King and therefore I hope they are well together.¹

Nothing came of this, but his posts as governor to the Duke of Gloucester and upon the Council of Regency were equal

¹ Wolseley (ii, 328) misreads " then " for " you " and misdates this letter 1698.

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to high Court or Cabinet rank. He could almost certainly have had Ministerial office himself, and perhaps, indeed, declined it. There is a letter from him to Shrewsbury of June 3, 1699, in which he says, "You will see the little encouragement there is to meddle with anything, whilst so much jealousy reigns."¹

The Bill for the resumption of the Irish lands forced him into a new antagonism with the King. Although his sister Arabella benefited by them, he had always disapproved of these grants, and no doubt his opinions were upon record. He therefore moved forward with the Tory Party. We do not know how far he went; but one rare gleam of light shows the King and Marlborough in open tug-of-war. Lord Lonsdale, Lord Privy Seal, was conducting the opposition to the Bill in the Commons. "I have just learned," wrote William to Bentinck (April 5, 1700),

from Dr Radcliffe, whom my Lord P. Seal has sent for, that he is extremely ill, which is at this moment a terrible contretemps. I fear he has "du spleene masle" [!]. If you can see him before you go to the House, encourage him to continue with firmness what he has so well begun. I did so myself yesterday evening; but Milord Marlborough who dogs his footsteps [*qui ne le quitte pas d'un pas*] certainly intimidates him. If the Bill does not now fall in your House, I count all lost.²

The unfortunate Privy Seal died of his illness later in the year.

The course Marlborough adopted gave dissatisfaction to both sides. "The feelings of the King," writes Archdeacon Coxe,³ "were too much wounded to regard with indulgence anyone who had favoured the obnoxious Bill; while the victorious party stigmatized all who had not fully entered into their measures, as enemies to the country." In January 1700 Vernon had written to Shrewsbury, "I think the cloud which has been hanging over my Lord Marlborough [about the Prince of Denmark's mortgage] is clearing up." But the

¹ Buccleuch Papers, H.M.C., ii, 622.

² *Correspondence of William III and Portland* (Royal Dutch Historical Society, 1927), No. 23, letter 273.

³ Coxe, i, 102. Coxe quotes several letters of Vernon to Shrewsbury which are as yet unpublished.

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new dispute darkened the sky again. In May we have a letter of Marlborough's to Shrewsbury :

The King's coldness to me still continues, so that I should have been glad to have had your friendly advice ; for to have friends and acquaintance unreasonably jealous, and the King at the same time angry, is what I know not how to bear ; nor do I know how to behave myself.¹

On the other hand, he supported the King in his efforts to prevent the undue reduction of the Army ; and, in fact, led the House of Lords in this direction. Generally his relations with the King were such that William thought it right to reappoint him to the Council of Regency on his departure for Holland.

It is plain that the Tory Party, in spite of their narrowness and violence, represented the nation in their pressure for peace, retrenchment, and reform of abuses. Now that the war was over, the curious criss-cross structure of English politics defined itself. The Tories, venerating the Monarchy, accepted an alien King only to bully him. The Whigs cherished their imported sovereign because he could ill defend his Prerogative. Thus, sharply as the factions were divided, the Tories could always count upon important Whig support whenever any difference with the King on current administration rose to the height of a constitutional issue. The war had held these forces in suspension. But the first three years of peace reduced King William to a pitiful plight. The self-sufficiency of the House of Commons knew no bounds. Sagacious in all that fell within their sphere of domestic knowledge, they were ignorant or disdainful of the world issues which were shortly to invade their affairs. Although the monarchical principle still swayed the vast majority, England had never been nearer a republic since the Commonwealth. "The party leaders," observes Ranke, "felt themselves stronger than the King." "The Royal authority," wrote a French agent in 1701, "is so enfeebled that England cannot but be regarded as a Republic, and her king as an

¹ Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 647.

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officer authorized to carry out what Parliament has ordered in the intervals between its sessions.”¹

These conditions which now manifested themselves so powerfully were long to prevail. The natural desire of sovereigns to govern, apart from party, with those whom they thought the best men, was for more than two hundred years to be forbidden. The party system was entering into its long supremacy. The overpowering victories of Marlborough under Queen Anne, the famous Administration of Chatham, or the supreme emergencies of the twentieth century might suspend the operation of this custom ; but in general and for nine-tenths of the time the Crown would be forced to subsist upon the alternation and interplay of opposing bands struggling for office, and for the assertion of their special loyalties, doctrines, and vested interests. It is astonishing that such a system should, on the whole, have proved so serviceable.

A tragical event supervened. The little Duke of Gloucester was now eleven. We can reproduce a picture of him in some detail from a contemporary tract written by one of his attendants named Jenkin Lewis.² In infancy he suffered from water on the brain : two attendants had to carry him everywhere. His mother did everything possible by doctors and changes of scene to improve his health ; his father tried beating him to make him normal. Apparently this was beneficial, for he was soon reprimanded for using mild swear-words. Above all the child loved playing with toy cannon, toy ships, and toy soldiers. Beyond this he formed an army of playmates, who staged miniature wars and battles. One of his most promising lieutenants was Marlborough's son. Says Lewis :

We every night had the ceremony of beating up the Tatta-ta-too, and the Word, and the Patrole, as in *garrison* ; which latter

¹ Cf. “Mémoire pour M. Poussin,” April 15, 1701, in R.O. transcripts.

² Miss Strickland (*Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. xi) calls the author Lewis Jenkins. Actually he was Jenkin Lewis, a Welsh equerry in attendance on the Duke of Gloucester. It may be that this error in Miss Strickland's references has concealed his tract from the vigilance of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the standard bibliographies.



THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER
By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

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was sometimes an excellent piece of diversion. My Lord Churchill was a bold-spirited youth, and not above two or three years older than the Duke, when he was admitted by him a Lieutenant-General. Mrs Atkinson [one of the governesses] invited Lady Hariote and Lady Anne Churchill one day to dine with her, in her chamber, and spend the day. Lord Churchill came with them. Mrs Wanley [another governess?] asked his Lordship, if he would go with the Duke? who answered briskly "Yes, I will!"—"What if you are killed?" said she. "I do not care!" which, the Duke hearing, took a secret delight in him from that moment. My Lord admired the Duke's Highland sword, which was readily bestowed on his Lordship by the Duke, although he was very fond of it, saying, he would bespeak another. Lady Anne Churchill, who was as sweet a creature as ever was seen, had a pretty case, containing a knife, fork, and spoon, which the Duke liked much, and asked what such a one would cost? She replied, with modesty, that she had won it at a lottery, but begged, if he liked it, that he would accept of it. He thanked her, and would with pleasure accept of it, if she would permit him to present her with something in return; which he afterwards remembered to do.

King William's interest in this child casts a pleasing light on his somewhat forbidding character. He saw and petted him repeatedly. At the time of the Fenwick trial, Gloucester, when but seven years old, caused one of his boy soldiers to write out the following address which he signed: "I, your Majesty's most dutiful subject, had rather lose my life in your majesty's cause than in any man's else, and I hope it will not be long ere you conquer France." To which his juvenile army and household appended, "We, your majesty's subjects, will stand by you while we have a drop of blood." In this same year he went with his mother to Tonbridge in order to study fortification "under the care of his clerical tutor." We may readily believe that with such propensities the young Prince rejoiced to have so martial a governor. It is, however, probable that Marlborough, far from encouraging this precocious militarism, inculcated habits of courtesy, gravity, and above all a judicious care of pounds, shillings, and pence.

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The hearts of Englishmen and the eyes of Europe were turned towards this child. The Whigs drew from his games the hope of a sovereign who would make valiant head against France. The Tories, on the other hand, repeated with gusto some of his alleged disrespectful interruptions to Burnet's constitutional discourses. A warrior prince, an English prince, a prince with Plantagenet blood and the necessary Parliamentary education—a good match for any warming-pan impostor, however clad with Divine Right!

These hopes were blasted; other solutions awaited the problems of the English people. On July 30, 1700, the Duke of Gloucester died of smallpox so swiftly that his governor reached his bedside only as he breathed his last. His playmate Churchill survived but three years, before he fell beneath the same fatal scourge. William wrote Marlborough a warm-hearted letter from Loo a few days later in which he expressed his surprise and grief at the little Duke's death. He added, "It is so great a loss to me, as well as to all England, that it pierces my heart with affliction." And he dispersed the household so promptly that Sarah had great difficulty in extracting their month's wages from the authorities of the Privy Purse.

Immense, far-reaching interests were opened by this new gap in the succession. Anne's health amid her repeated miscarriages and stillborn births was precarious. William's days were plainly drawing to a close. The crown of England, and with it not only all those issues of religion and Constitution which obsessed men's minds, but also the part which the British Isles would play in the destiny of Europe, was once again adrift on a dark, tempestuous ocean. There were many alternatives and many weighty objections to all of them. No one seems to have hankered for James II; but naturally many thoughts turned to the Prince of Wales. The warming-pan myth had lost its primal power. Why should he not be brought up under William's care in Holland? A Protestant, if possible; a Catholic, if it must be, but none the less with his constitutional duties engrained in him.

Historians have debated whether William did not at this time of amity with France dwell upon this solution. He

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certainly played with it. Had James II died one year earlier and the rightful heir been left alone, freed from the antagonisms which centred upon his father, our affairs might have decided themselves differently. And does not this fact, that even William balanced the issue of bringing back a prince from Saint-Germains, imply some rebuke upon those crude, superficial critics who have sought to brand as villainy all correspondence with the exiled Court? Then there were the children of Victor Amadeus of Savoy, who had married the daughter of Charles II's sister, the famous 'Minette.' But the house of Savoy was under a cloud. Its Duke had so recently deserted the Grand Alliance in the face of the enemy. Thirdly there were the rights of the house of Hanover, at this time represented by the aged Electress Sophia. This solution seemed likely to renew all the difficulties which had arisen in England through the importation of a foreign King. All monarchical sentiment longed for a prince of island character and English speech. But there was another sentiment which suddenly surged up stark and logical. Why should the nation be tormented by these riddles of a disputed succession? Why should not William III be the last King in England? The expense of a Court was in those days sufficient to maintain powerful additions to the Navy or afford longed-for reliefs of taxation. The sudden advance of the republican idea made it imperative that a decision should be reached without delay. This mood dictated the Act of Settlement, and gave the crown to the house of Hanover in a statute which was virtually a reproach upon the reign of King William. The sovereign must be an Anglican—neither a Catholic nor a Calvinist. He must never leave the country without the permission of Parliament (as some had done so often). He must be advised not by any secret Cabinet or closet about his person, but by the Privy Council as a whole; and the Privy Council must be governed by the preponderating authority of an elected assembly wielding the money power. Thus the reign of Anne would be an interlude; and all would be in readiness at her death to give a dutiful and chilling reception to a Hanoverian prince.

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We have no doubt where the Marlboroughs stood in these dominant matters. They must have been unswervingly hostile to any plan of the Prince of Wales intervening between Anne and her declared rights of succession. After Anne they felt themselves free to choose. It was unwise to peer too far ahead.

The untimely death of the Duke of Gloucester deprived Marlborough of his office ; but he was by now so strongly established in the centre of English politics that, in spite of his recent difference with the King, his personal position was unimpaired.

These years had seen William helpless before the Tories. The Whigs, with whom he agreed on current issues, could not or would not carry the needful measures. Perhaps with responsibility and royal favour the Tories would abate their ire. The King had turned to them. The Whig Ministers dropped out one by one. Shrewsbury was at length allowed to depart for the Continent. Russell (Orford) had quitted the Admiralty. The brilliant Montagu, who had lost all his hold over the House of Commons, saw himself obliged to resign the Treasury. Somers, over-conscious of his virtues, hung on until he was dismissed. All these places were filled by Tories. Rochester re-entered the Cabinet ; Godolphin resumed his long control of finance ; and Marlborough, with a non-party outlook, a Whig foreign policy, and a rather faded Tory coat, was found moving sedately along the central line of impending national requirements. Yet this was due to neither oratory nor intrigue. It was not due to such backstairs influence as Sunderland so persistently and often beneficially exercised ; nor to the busy agitations and wire-pullings of a rising man like Harley, now become Speaker and accepted Tory leader in the House of Commons. It was mainly a weight acquired by personal ascendancy, fortified by continual buildings up and judicious withholdings.

In October 1700 Brydges, who had called upon him, noted down in his diary, " My Lord [Marlborough] told me, he believed the Parl: would not be dissolved, and that for

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Secretary of State the King had not disposed of it, not denying it might be given to himself."¹ A Dutch envoy reported home, "On dit toujours que le comte de Marlborough sera fait secrétaire d'état et le Lord Godolphin, premier commissaire de la trésorerie, mais ces deux icy ne sont pas encore declarez."² These anticipations were reduced to irrelevance by wider events.

¹ Brydges' Journal, October 31, 1700, Huntington Library MSS.

² L'Hermitage to the States-General, November 1/12, 1700 (Add. MSS., 17677 U.U., f. 324).

CHAPTER XXXI
THE SPANISH SUCCESSION
(1698-1701)

NO great war was ever entered upon with so much reluctance on both sides as the War of the Spanish Succession.¹ Europe was exhausted and disillusioned. The bitter aftermath of eight years' desultory conflict had turned all men's minds to peace, or at least to a change of experience, and to economic instead of military expansion. The new-found contacts which had sprung up between William and Louis expressed the heartfelt wishes of the peoples both of the Maritime Powers and of France. Over them and all the rest of Europe hung the long-delayed, long-dreaded, ever-approaching demise of the Spanish Crown. All the most sundering issues which could tear the states of Europe must be raised by that awful yet inevitable event. But here was the breathing-space, a time when passions seemed burned out, when blood was chill, when hands of friendship were cordially joined across the harsh antagonisms of strife and fear. Surely these two great princes, so uplifted by their qualities and their power above the human scene, long matched in equal combat, now united in mutual respect, could if they tried find a peaceful road which their tired, jaded subjects could tread. A renewal of the world war would not be only a catastrophe; it would be an anticlimax.

There is no doubt about the sincerity of William III in the peace effort. It did not only arise from his own nature. He could not conceive how England could be brought again into the field. She seemed to have shot her bolt for at least a generation. He saw the turbulent pacifism of the Parlia-

¹ This chapter is founded mainly on the standard works of Saint-Simon, Baudrillart, Hippeau, Legrelle, Van Noorden, Lavissee, Vast, Klopp, and on the R.O. French transcripts.

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ment; he bowed to the irresistible pressure of disarmament; he understood, while he resented, the insularity and detachment of his acquired subjects. Holland might yet resist any menace to her frontier; but England was cloyed with the Continent, and saw in a strong navy and a strict neutrality a sure escape from a deadly labyrinth. Without the aid of England the States-General must submit to almost anything short of subjugation. War against France without the power of Britain was impossible. Therefore William was in earnest. He must keep peace at almost any price.

Historians have held lengthy disputes about the sincerity of Louis XIV. There is an extensive argument in his favour. Amid so many years of aggression, intrigue, and Olympian chicanery, it seems to an important school of writers almost incredible that the Great Monarch should not once for a brief space have lapsed into good faith. But the truth is that the temptations to which Louis was exposed were such as to sap the virtue of almost any mortal. The sense of embodying in his own small frame the glory of the greatest nation in Christendom at the moment of its fullest efflorescence; the habit of absolute power in all things great and petty; the lure of playing the game of giant against pygmies—*Nec pluribus impar*—with so many advantages in his hand: all these were decisive. They led him to a policy in which fair dealing was so mingled with false dealing, and good nature so latticed by design, that the whole could become only one abominable deception.

More than thirty agitated years had passed since the old Partition Treaty of 1668. The feeble life-candle of the childless Spanish King, known to his country as Charles the Sufferer, flickered, smoked, guttered, but still burned. At any moment it might have gone out. Yet it kept alight for nearly a third of a century, and one by one the great statesmen of Europe who had watched for its extinction had themselves been overtaken by the darkness of night. But now the candle burned low in the socket. To the ravages of deformity and disease were added the most grievous afflictions of the mind. The royal victim believed himself to be

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possessed by the devil. Priestly charlatans pretended to exorcize the evil spirit, and a hideous mummery was enacted in which the wretched monarch thought he saw an apparition, and nearly died of terror. His only comfort was in the morbid contemplation of the tomb. He would totter down the stairway which led to the mausoleum where his ancestors and his wife lay buried. He opened their coffins and gazed fixedly on their remains. He lay in his own coffin shrouded in the ceremonies of death. Meanwhile the disorders of his body and mind grew in seemingly endless aggravation, and all the nations waited in suspense upon his failing pulses and deepening mania. Every sign and symptom of which report was carried to the Courts of Europe betokened the end. What then was to happen to half the world, and what would the other half do with it? A score of claimants, ranging from a successful usurper in Portugal to the Emperor Leopold, confident in his vague, but to his mind paramount, dynastic right, would come forward to demand a greater or lesser share of the mighty heritage. But could not William and Louis, incomparably the most skilled and experienced diplomatists in Europe, lords of the strongest armies and fleets in existence, both of whom saw and shrank from the danger of a renewal of the European conflict, devise some solution to which every candidate would be forced to bow?

The French historian Legrelle devotes a volume of five hundred pages to each of the two new Partition Treaties. We have no intention of being drawn beyond the briefest outline of what happened. England and Holland, who lived by sea-borne trade and dreamed of colonies and wealth beyond the oceans, could not bear that the control of Spain, the Indies, Mexico, South America, and the Mediterranean should fall into the competent hands of France. They saw themselves shut out by prohibitive tariffs, mercantile laws, and indefinite naval expansion, alike from their daily bread and their future. The independence of Belgium from France was a vital interest which England and Holland shared in common. The Protestant states shivered at the prospect of the Government that had revoked the Edict of Nantes being united with the

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Government that had devised and enforced the Holy Inquisition. The Emperor, that Catholic despot without whose aid Protestantism and Parliamentary institutions would be imperilled, advanced proud and impracticable claims. Though the rights to the Spanish Empire which he possessed were legally inferior, it seemed necessary to support him at all costs against the possibility of unlimited French expansion. Unless a settlement could be reached between him and France there must be general war. The Imperial Court had long accustomed itself to a dynastic monopoly of the Spanish throne, and no settlement could be reached with France which did not injure and anger it. Still, if Louis and William could agree upon a settlement, they would together have the power to impose their will on all concerned.

The peace so earnestly desired could only take the form of a new partition of the Spanish Empire. Very secretly—breathing not a word to Spain nor to the Emperor—the two leading princes set about this task. There were three claimants, each of whom, as set forth in the table at p. 521, could advance important pretensions. The first was France, represented either by the Dauphin or, if the two crowns could not be joined, by his second son, the Duke of Anjou. These rights rested upon the marriage of Louis XIV with the eldest Spanish princess. They were barred by a solemn renunciation at the time of Louis XIV's marriage with the then Infanta of Spain. But Cardinal Mazarin had woven the question of her dowry into the act of renunciation; and certainly the dowry had not been paid by Spain. Next there was the Emperor, who, as the widower of the younger Spanish princess, claimed as much as he could, but was willing to transfer his claims to the second son of his own second wife, the Archduke Charles. Thirdly there was the Emperor's grandson by his first marriage, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria. The essence of the new Partition Treaty of September 24, 1698, was to give the bulk of the Spanish Empire to the candidate who, if not strongest in right, was at least weakest in power. Louis and William both promised to recognize the Electoral Prince as heir to Charles II. The Dauphin was

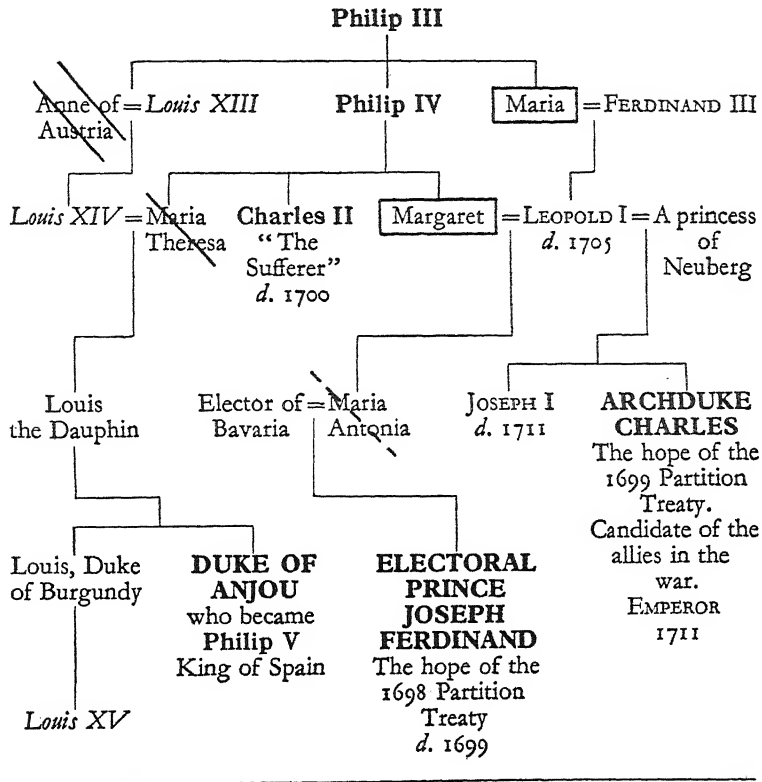
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to receive Sicily, Naples, Finale, and certain other Italian territories. The Archduke Charles was to have the Milanese. The Maritime Powers represented by William had no claims at all; but they were assured of important trading rights beyond the oceans.

These distributions might be represented as an act of self-denial by France. In fact, however, her acquisitions in Italy were solid; they were to be obtained without further war, and the power of the Emperor received only a minimum augmentation. At least the balance of Europe was preserved. Moreover, when historians speak of Spain, the Indies, and the bulk of the Spanish Empire 'going to' the Electoral Prince, what they really mean is that the Electoral Prince would go to Madrid and would reign there as a Spanish sovereign. Very different would be the destination of the splendid Italian provinces. They 'went' to France, and through the Dauphin were directly incorporated in the dominions of Louis XIV. Still, we must regard this treaty as a real effort in the cause of peace. It could not long remain secret.

As soon as the Emperor learned its import he was infuriated. He refused to accede to the treaty; he declared himself basely deserted by his late allies. The repercussion upon Spain was not less decisive. Only one conviction dominated the Castilian aristocracy—the Spanish Empire must not be divided. It was intolerable to their patriotism—indeed, to their good sense—that the empire their ancestors had gathered should be parcelled out in fragments. They denounced the treachery of their allies, who had coldly carved them in pieces. If the Spanish line was extinct, if a new dynasty must rule, let it rule over the inheritance in its integrity. Who the prince might be, whence he came, what were his connexions—all these, compared to mutilation, were regarded in Madrid as trivial. Accordingly Spain plumped for the Electoral Prince. Where the trunk of their empire was, there the limbs should also go. On November 14 Charles signed and declared a will by which the whole of the Spanish domains passed intact to the Electoral Prince. This decision, for what it was worth, stripped the Emperor even of the Milanese, and it was certain he would

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KEY

MALES

Kings of France thus: **Louis XIII.**

Emperors thus: **Charles II.**

Kings of Spain thus: **Philip III.**

Candidates for the Spanish throne thus: **Duke of Anjou.**

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- ~~///~~ indicates full renunciation of Spanish throne.
- ~~/~~ „ conditional renunciation of Spanish throne.
- - - „ private and invalid renunciation of Spanish throne.
- „ no renunciation of Spanish throne.

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not accept it. Nevertheless he did not seem capable of overriding the will, which even in a degree reinforced the pact which William had reached with Louis. The preponderating and most active forces in Europe seemed capable of imposing the Partition Treaty of 1698 upon the world.

But now a startling event occurred. The Treaty of Partition had been signed at William's palace at Loo in September 1698. The will of Charles II was made public on November 14. On February 6 the little Prince of Bavaria, the heir to these prodigious domains, the child in whose chubby hands the greatest states had resolved to place the most splendid prize, suddenly died. Why did he die, how did he die? A coincidence so extraordinary could not fail to excite dark suspicions. But the fact glared grimly upon the world. All these elaborate, perilous conversations must be begun over again.

The positions of the disputants had changed somewhat by the beginning of 1699. The Treaty of Carlowitz had brought to an end the long Austro-Turkish war. The Emperor was free to concentrate his strength upon the West. Thus Louis XIV's chance of obtaining the entire Spanish heritage for his son or grandson without a serious struggle with the Empire became even smaller. But this advantage was more than balanced by the action of the House of Commons in disbanding the British Army, and by its violent opposition to all Continental entanglements. Ultimately William and Louis arranged a second Treaty of Partition on June 11, 1699. To the disgust of Harcourt, his Ambassador at Madrid, Louis consented to the Archduke Charles being heir-in-chief. To him were assigned Spain, the overseas colonies, and Belgium, on the condition that they should never be united with the Empire. The Dauphin was to have Naples and Sicily, the Milanese, which was to be exchanged for Lorraine, and certain other Italian possessions. The terms of this provisional treaty allowed the Emperor two months in which to decide whether he would or would not be a party to it. Strenuous diplomatic efforts were made by the Dutch to win his agreement to this huge gratification of his dynastic pride. But his heart

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was set upon Italy; and he finally refused in the words, "Status valde miserabilis si daremus Gallo quæ peteret; esset potentior!"¹

On March 13, 1700, therefore, the treaty was ratified only by France and the Maritime Powers.

From this point onward the guile of Louis becomes obvious. During the greater part of 1700, while he was negotiating with William, his Ambassador in Madrid was using every resource, especially money, to win the Spanish Court to the interests of a French prince.² At one and the same time he was signing with William the treaty which favoured the Archduke Charles, fomenting a party in Madrid in favour of his grandson, the second son of the Dauphin, Philip, Duke of Anjou, and gradually moving a considerable army towards the Spanish frontier. Since the Emperor would not accept the Partition Treaty, and war between France and the Empire seemed certain, it was natural that, if he must fight anyhow, Louis should fight for the maximum rather than for the minimum claims of his dynasty. Moreover, the weakness of England's pacific mood and the consequent incoherence of the Maritime Powers became continually more apparent. He therefore soothed William with his treaty, and shook Madrid with his propaganda, resolving to seize what fortune should offer.

The event was decisive. Charles II was on his deathbed. Within that diseased frame, that clouded mind, that superstitious soul, trembling on the verge of eternity, there glowed one imperial thought—unity. He was determined as he lay prostrate, scarcely able to utter a word or stir a finger, with his last gasp to proclaim that his vast dominions should pass intact and entire to one prince and to one alone. But to which? His second wife, the Emperor's sister-in-law, naturally favoured the claims of the Austrian Archduke. Her wishes seemed likely to prevail. But in the nick of time the French gold in Madrid and the French bayonets beyond the Pyrenees triumphed. The influence of the Holy See under the new

¹ "Our condition would be very wretched if we were to give France what she asks; hers would be the stronger."

² See the significant correspondence published by C. Hippeau in *L'Avènement des Bourbons* (1875).

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Pope was transferred to the side of France. A palace revolution occurred. The Archbishop of Toledo, with a few other priests, established himself in the sick-room and forbade the Queen to enter. The King was then persuaded to sign a will leaving his throne to the Duke of Anjou. The will was completed on October 7, and couriers galloped with the news from the Escorial to Paris. On November 1 Charles II expired.

Louis XIV had now reached one of the great turning-points in the history of France. Should he stand by the treaty, reject the will, and face a single war with the Empire? Should he repudiate the treaty, endorse the will, and defend his grandson's claims in the field against all comers? Apart from good faith and solemnly signed agreements upon which the ink was barely dry, the choice, like so many momentous choices, was nicely balanced. Tallard on arriving from England at Fontainebleau on November 2 learned of the will and of the Spanish King's extremity. He advised Louis to maintain the Partition Treaty. War with the Emperor was, in any case, certain, but if the treaty were maintained, the Emperor would find few or no allies. History, he added, showed that a French King of Spain was not necessarily an advantage to France. Torcy supported Tallard. Louis, to gain time to poise and ponder upon the decision, ordered the Dutch Pensionary Heinsius to be informed that he would adhere to the treaty. But while he sought to persuade the Maritime Powers to promise their aid in enforcing it, and thus to divide them from the Emperor, he took care not to close the door in Madrid.

The news of the death of Charles II reached Paris on November 8, and no further delay was possible. According to Saint-Simon, a conference was held in Madame de Maintenon's rooms at which the King, his brother, Pontchartrain (the Chancellor), the Duc de Beauvilliers, and Torcy were present. Torcy and Beauvilliers were for the treaty. The Chancellor and the King's brother were for the will. The enemies of Madame de Maintenon have alleged, though Torcy denies it, that she swayed the decision. At any rate, the will had it. On November 12 Louis wrote to Madrid accordingly.

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On November 16 a famous scene was enacted at Versailles. After the Great King's levee he brought his grandson and the Spanish Ambassador, Castel des Rios, into his cabinet. To the latter he said, indicating the Duke of Anjou, "You may salute him as your King." The Ambassador fell on his knees, kissed the Prince's hand, and made prolonged homage in Spanish. Louis said, "He does not yet understand Spanish. It is I who will answer for him." Thereupon the double doors which led into the grand gallery were opened, and the King said to the assembled courtiers, "Gentlemen, there is the King of Spain. His birth called him to this crown. The Spanish nation has wished it and has demanded it of me. I have granted their wish with joy. It was the command of heaven." Then, turning to the new King, he added, "Be a good Spaniard—that is your first duty ; but remember that you are born a Frenchman, and preserve the union between the two nations. That is the way to make them happy and to preserve the peace of Europe." Castel des Rios epitomized the proceedings by his celebrated indiscretion, "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées."

We must now return to England. William was dining at Hampton Court when the news arrived. He bent his head in vain attempt to conceal his feelings. He saw the work of his lifetime was to be shattered, yet he was powerless. He knew it would be futile to appeal to Parliament. He thought of sending Matthew Prior, the poet, to Paris to protest—of summoning the States-General to meet. But Torcy had written a *mémoire justificatif* upon his master's action. His arguments were plausible. The Maritime Powers had failed to guarantee the Partition Treaty ; the Emperor would not accept it ; the right of the Spanish people to choose their own King was paramount ; the separation of the two crowns was promised. Rochester and Godolphin dwelt on the difficulty of forcing upon Spain and the Empire—the two supremely interested parties—an arrangement which they were both prepared to resist in arms. King William bowed to the awful logic of circumstances. On December 22 Tallard was able to report that the English

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and the Dutch would recognize Philip V. They would merely demand certain safeguards. William could only trust that from the discussion of these safeguards a Grand Alliance against France would emerge.

A contemporary letter from London ¹ shows how deeply Louis's good faith was suspected.

We shall soon see how the Emperor will take such a *camouflet* ² if you know the word. It is when a puff of smoke is blown into a man's nose. There seems to be great silence at this Court. The Emperor and others in my opinion are dupes. The Treaty was made to amuse the world, and to turn the poor King of Spain to his Will. Monsieur Harcourt's being made a Duke confirms my view; it is his reward for managing the Spaniards so well. Tallard is once more dupe; he thought he had made his fortune by making the Treaty, and is only the tool used by his Master in his deception.

We must glance for one moment at the new wearer of the Spanish crown. He was at eighteen a perfect product of the Madame de Maintenon régime at the French Court. He was an ardent Catholic and a devout Frenchman. He was equally averse from either work or pleasure. He suffered all his life from "palpitations and hypochondria," and was very highly sexed. Since his religion allowed him no gratification outside the marriage chamber, a bride was speedily found in a princess of Savoy. At her death he married again immediately on priestly and medical advice. He no doubt wished on entering Spain at the beginning of 1701 to make himself popular. His success was partial. Unpunctuality was his rule of life. He promised to rise early each morning and attend the Council of State. Actually, however, his Ministers, who met at nine, invariably awaited him until eleven. He promised to dine occasionally in public. He ordered supper to be at eight, but rarely sat down till eleven. He could not endure Spanish cooking and speedily replaced his Spanish domestic staff with Frenchmen. He pined for France. He

¹ Michel le Vassor to Sir William Trumbull, November 15, 1700, Downshire Papers, H.M.C., ii, 800.

² A small countermine to break in upon the gallery of a mine. Mines are 'sprung'; camouflets are 'blown.'

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used to shut himself up in his room with a confidant and weep tears at the thought of the delights of Versailles and Fontainebleau. Early in 1702 the Marquis de Louville, who knew him well, prophesied correctly, "C'est un roi qui ne règne pas et qui ne règnera jamais."¹ The King, in fact, was always a tool either in the hands of his grandfather, of his wife's governess, Madame des Ursins, or of his confessors. All the important decisions of Spanish policy were taken henceforward by Louis XIV.

The House of Commons was in a mood far removed from European realities. Neither party would believe that they could be forced into war against their will—still less that their will would change. They had just compelled William to sign the Act of Settlement. They had just completed the disarmament of England. They eagerly accepted Louis XIV's assurance, conveyed through Tallard, that, "content with his power, he would not seek to increase it at the expense of his grandson." Lulled by this easy lie, they even deemed the will of Charles II preferable to either of the Partition Treaties. It was, indeed, upon these abortive instruments that the Tory wrath was centred. Not only were the treaties stigmatized as ill advised in themselves, and treacherous to allies, but that they should have been negotiated and signed in secret was declared a constitutional offence. In chief they assailed Portland for having led the King astray. He replied that the whole Cabinet was responsible. Challenged in the House of Lords to name his associates, he mentioned not only his principal Cabinet colleagues, but Marlborough. Marlborough immediately rose in his place and disclaimed responsibility, adding that if he were free to speak he could prove his statement.² The other impugned Ministers followed his example. The Lords demanded that permission should be sought from

¹ *Mémoires de Louville*, vol. i.

² "L'étonnement des gens qui se trouvèrent nommés fut sans égal, Milord Marlborough prit la parole et dit qu'il estoit vray qu'il avoit eu connoissance dudit traité, mais qu'on ne trouveroit rien à redire à sa conduite s'il pouvoit parler; or il faut scavoir pour entendre cette réponse que les Ministres prettent serment de ne rien dire de ce qui se fait dans le conseil et qu'il prétendoit son silence de cette raison." This speech of Marlborough's, given in Tallard's report of March 24, has not been noticed before. For the debate in general see Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, ix, 194 seq.

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the King for a full disclosure. Accordingly the next day the Ministers and Marlborough in succession explained that they had been presented with the treaties only as accomplished facts.

In the embryonic condition of Cabinet government which then prevailed such a defence was not invalid. The King was the sole director of foreign policy, and Parliament only assented to it. From the reign of Anne onward the Prime Minister and the Cabinet guided foreign policy. The Commons now exhibited articles of impeachment against Portland and several of the other Ministers, but not against Marlborough, who, though secretly apprised of the transaction, held no office, and was also protected by his Toryism. These impeachments struggled slowly forward against the resistance of the House of Lords. We cannot measure the pressures which were at work, but Marlborough once again chose the Tory Party in preference to the King. He even voted for protests against the decisions of the majority of the House of Lords, although these were couched in terms so violent that they have been expunged from the records. Had he been a Secretary of State he would perhaps have shaped the treaties differently, but, wise or unwise, he would not accept the blame for a policy to which he had not been a party, and he no doubt meant this to be plainly understood. Such were his relations with William at the end of 1700.

But now a series of ugly incidents broke from outside upon the fevered complacency of English politics. The first of these brings upon the scene that same Melfort whom we left at Saint-Germains poring with Nairne over the document which purported to be Marlborough's letter betraying the Brest expedition. In February Sir Robert Cotton, the Postmaster-General, found in the English mail-bag from Paris a letter addressed from Melfort in Paris to his elder brother, Perth, at Saint-Germains. The letter spoke of the existence of a strong Jacobite party in Scotland, and discussed, as if it were a matter actually in hand, a plan for the immediate French invasion of England in the Jacobite cause. William pounced upon this as proof of French perfidy. On February 17 he presented it to both Houses of Parliament with the utmost circumstance.

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There was a strong sensation. Lords and Commons alike were convinced that such a letter could only have been written in time of peace with encouragement from Versailles. The faithful Tallard, found without instructions, defended his master as best he could. Louis was justly incensed. He knew some trick had been played, and with a deeply instructed purpose. Stringent inquiries were made by the French authorities. Melfort protested that he had only written to his brother at Saint-Germains. How, then, had the letter got into the mail for London? It must, suggested Melfort, have been an accident in making up the bags in Paris. The French Government would not accept this excuse. They believed he had written the letter ostensibly to Saint-Germains, but had arranged to have it slipped into the wrong mail with the direct object of embroiling the two countries. They suspected that he had been bribed by one of King William's agents to work this mischief. Although this could not be proved, Melfort was banished to Angers. He never saw James again.

About this same time Parliament began to realize that the language and attitude of the French King about the essential separation of the crowns of France and Spain was, at the very least, ambiguous. In February 1701, indeed, Louis XIV had expressly reserved his grandson's right of succession to the French throne, an action which seemed fatally significant to the Maritime Powers. Then came the news—keenly disturbing to all the British commercial interests represented by the Whig Party as the champions of civil and religious liberty—that the Spaniards had handed over to a French company the entire right of importing negro slaves into South America. It became simultaneously apparent that the freedom of British trade in the Mediterranean was in jeopardy. But the supreme event which roused all England to an understanding of what had actually happened in the virtual union of the crowns of France and Spain was a tremendous military operation effected under the guise of brazen legality. Philip V had been received with acclamation in Madrid. The Spanish Netherlands rejoiced in his accession. The bon-

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fires blazed in the streets of Brussels in honour of their new sovereign. The fortresses of Belgium constituted the main barrier of the Dutch against the French invasion. After the Peace of Nimwegen the most important had been occupied by Dutch garrisons who shared with their then Spanish allies the guardianship of these vital strongholds. But now the position was reversed. The Spaniards were the allies of France, joined not by a scrap of paper, but by kindred crowns. The European states which had fought against France in the late war were still undecided. But everywhere the storm signal had been hoisted. Preparations were being made; officers and soldiers were being recalled from penury to their old formations. Louis, knowing that his enemies would fight if they could muster strength and courage, resolved to make sure of the barrier fortresses.

William foresaw with agony the approaching blow. During the month of February 1701 strong French forces arrived before all the fortresses of the barrier. The Spanish commanders welcomed them with open gates. They had come, it was contended, only to help protect the possessions of His Most Catholic Majesty. The Dutch garrisons, overawed by force, and no one daring to break the peace, were interned. Antwerp and Mons; Namur—King William's famous conquest—Léau, Venloo, and a dozen secondary strongholds like Ath, Nieuport, Ostende, Oudenarde—all passed in a few weeks, without a shot fired, by the lifting of a few cocked hats, into the hands of Louis XIV. Others, like Liége, Huy, and Ruremonde, fell under his control through the adhesion to France of the Archbishop of Liége. Citadels defended during all the years of general war, the loss or capture of any one of which would have been boasted as the fruits of a hard campaign, were swept away while a moon waxed and waned. Every one of these fortresses had to be retaken by Marlborough before he could even reach the position established at the Peace of Nimwegen. Only Maestricht, by the accident of an exceptionally strong Dutch garrison which guarded enormous supply depots, escaped the general landslide. Thus all that the Grand Alliance of 1689 had achieved

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in the Low Countries in eight years of war melted like snow at Easter.

Europe was roused, and at last England was staggered. Some of Louis's admirers condemn him for this violent measure. They argue that when all was going so well for his designs, when his grandson had been accepted as rightful King by every part of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and the New, when his adversaries in their lack of union seemed utterly impotent, he should have displayed all the virtues of quiescence and restraint. But, like William, he knew that the storm was gathering. He had launched himself upon an audacious voyage ; and he knew the value of the fortresses. The nations were now arming fast, and we may imagine with what a glow of hope and salvation all those poor, neglected, despised, professional soldiers saw again the certainty of employment, of pay, of food, of shelter, and the chance of fame. Once more fighting men would come into their own. Once more the drums would beat, and the regiments in their brilliant uniforms would march along the highways. Once more the smug merchants and crafty politicians would find they could not do without 'popinjays.' Once more they would flatter the martial class and beg—though so lately ungrateful—for its renewed protection.

In the early summer of 1701 the Whig Party, a minority in the House of Commons, mobilized its pamphleteers to convert the electorate. Daniel Defoe led the band. Their main theme was the danger to English commerce from a French King in Spain. An interesting tract, *The Duke of Anjou's Succession Considered*, devoted the whole of its second part to the trade question. "Our all is now at stake, and perhaps in as great a danger as at any time since we were a nation." Thus the Whigs. But the Tories were slow in realizing the evolution of opinion which was already so marked. They were still hunting William III and planning retrenchment. They were still dreaming of detachment from Europe when the nation awoke beneath them. On May 8, 1701, the freeholders of Kent presented a petition to the Commons, begging the House to grant supplies to enable the King to help his

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allies "before it is too late." The militant pacifists were for punishing the freeholders for their presumption. They actually imprisoned their leaders; but the ground crumbled beneath their feet. The insular structure in which they sought to dwell crashed about their ears. The mass of the Tory Parliament had already moved some distance. On June 12, when they had extorted from the King his assent to the Act of Settlement, Parliament had also authorized him to "seek allies." Ten thousand men, at any rate, should be guaranteed to Holland. They still pushed forward with the obsolete impeachments of Portland and his colleagues; but William felt the tide had set in his favour, and on the flow he prorogued Parliament, well knowing that their hour had passed.

French writers are prone to underrate the deep feelings of resentment which grew up during 1701 in both England and Holland at the spectacle of Louis XIV actually taking over the government of the Spanish Empire. With every month that passed the appalling realities penetrated wider circles; but the manner in which William III organized and harnessed the gathering wrath for resistance to French aggression commands just admiration. At the end of 1700 the French agents in London and at The Hague reported that there was not the least likelihood of either of the Maritime Powers declaring war upon France; but William, although he knew himself a doomed man and saw his life's work collapsing before his eyes, turned every mistake made by Louis to so much account that by the middle of 1701 the two parties in opposition to him, the Tory majority in the House of Commons and the powerful burgesses of Amsterdam, were both begging him to do everything that he "thought needful for the preservation of the peace of Europe"—that is to say, for war.

The same processes which undermined the Tory factions and all their reasonings, so weighty to modern minds, united William and Marlborough. They joined forces, nor was their partnership unequal. For while King William now saw that he could once again draw the sword of England, he felt the melancholy conviction that he himself would never

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more wield it. This was no time on either side for half-confidences or old griefs. Some one must carry on. In his bones the King knew there was but one man. On May 31 he proclaimed Marlborough Commander-in-Chief of the English forces assembling in Holland. On June 28—the day of the Prorogation—he appointed him Ambassador Extraordinary to the United Provinces. The instructions to Marlborough¹ show the far-reaching character of his powers. Discretion was given him not only to frame, but to conclude treaties without reference, if need be, to King or Parliament. But the King would be at hand and would maintain the closest contact possible. On July 1 the royal yacht carried them both to Holland. Though the opportunities of the reign had been marred or missed by their quarrels and misunderstandings, the two warrior-statesmen were at last united. Though much was lost, all might be retrieved. The formation of the Grand Alliance had begun.

¹ See Appendix, III.

CHAPTER XXXII
THE GRAND ALLIANCE
(1701-1702)

THE duties at length confided to Marlborough were of supreme importance. He was to make one last effort to avert the war. If that failed, he was to make an offensive and defensive alliance against France between the three great Powers, England, Holland, and the Empire; thereafter to draw into the confederacy by subsidiary treaties Prussia, Denmark, and as many of the German states and principalities as possible, and to make a treaty with Sweden ensuring at least her friendly neutrality. He was to settle by negotiation the *dénombrement*—*i.e.*, the quota of troops and seamen which each signatory would provide for the common cause—and to arrange the military precedence of the officers of the various allied forces. Besides this he was to receive, distribute, organize, train, and command the British army now assembling behind the Dutch frontier; and finally to provide for their munitions and food not only in 1701 for a possible autumn, but for a certain spring campaign in 1702. The King was at hand, usually at Loo, but in practice everything was left to Marlborough and settled by him. Meanwhile through Godolphin he vigilantly watched the tempestuous Parliamentary situation at home, the movement of English opinion, and the reactions which these produced upon King William. In this press of affairs he passed the next four months, and for the first time we see him extended upon a task equal to his capacity.

At this moment also two men who were to be his closest intimates and to continue at his side in unflinching loyalty through the whole period make their appearance. They were already his old friends.¹ William Cadogan, the son of

¹ See the articles on these men in *D.N.B.* There are a large number of Cadogan's and Cardonnel's letters in the British Museum.

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a Dublin lawyer, had won Marlborough's confidence at the taking of Cork and Kinsale. He was now serving in Ireland as a major of the Royal Irish Dragoons. Marlborough appointed him Quartermaster-General in the Low Countries, and he came to Holland with the twelve battalions transported thither from Ireland. Throughout the ten campaigns he was not only Quartermaster-General, but what we should call Chief of the Staff and Director of Intelligence. It was Marlborough's practice to send with the reconnoitring cavalry an officer of high rank who knew the Commander-in-Chief's mind and his plans and could observe the enemy through his eyes. Cadogan repeatedly played this part, and on a larger scale his advance-guard action at Oudenarde is a model of military competence, discretion, and daring. He was in the van of all the battles and in numberless operations. Nothing disturbed his fidelity to his chief or the mutual comprehension between them. He shared Marlborough's fall, refusing to separate himself from "the great man to whom I am under such infinite obligations." "I would be a monster," he added, "if I did otherwise."

The second was his military and political secretary. Adam de Cardonnel, the son of a French Protestant, had entered the War Office at an early age, rose to be a Chief Clerk, and came in contact with Marlborough at the beginning of William's reign. From the early part of 1692 he had acted as his secretary, and was in his closest personal friendship and confidence. He too made all the campaigns with Marlborough. He conducted the whole of his correspondence with the sovereigns, princes, and commanders of the Grand Alliance and with the English political leaders, drafting the letters himself, writing from Marlborough's dictation, or copying what his chief had written, to the very great advantage of its grammar and spelling. Cardonnel also was to "pursue the triumph and partake the gale." Thus when the occasion came to Marlborough he was not only ready himself, but he had at his disposal both a military and a civilian instrument which he had long selected and prepared, and which were so perfectly adapted to his needs that they were never changed.

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At this moment also appears upon our scene Marlborough's famous comrade. During the spring the Emperor, with the encouragement of King William, had gathered an army of thirty thousand men in the Southern Tyrol. At the head of this stood Prince Eugene.

Prince François Eugene of Savoy¹ was born at Paris in 1663, but from the age of twenty, for just over fifty years and in more than thirty campaigns, he commanded the armies and fought the battles of Austria on all the fronts of the Empire. When he was not fighting the French, he was fighting the Turks. A colonel at twenty, a major-general at twenty-one, he was made a general of cavalry at twenty-six. He was a commander-in-chief ten years before Marlborough. He was still a commander-in-chief, fighting always in the van, more than twenty years after Marlborough's work was done. At the end of his life of innumerable and almost unceasing perils, toils, checks, and triumphs, his skinny body scarred with many wounds, he could still revel in his military duties. He never married, and although he was a discerning patron of art, his only passion was warfare. His decisive victory over the Turks at Zenta in 1697 made him at this moment in our story "the most renowned commander in Europe."²

Eugene was a grandson of Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy and son of Olympe Mancini, a niece of Cardinal Mazarin and one of the most beautiful women at the Court of Louis XIV. As a youth, his weakly frame, turned-up nose, and short upper lip gave him, despite his fine eyes, a vacant

¹ There is unhappily no good book in English on Prince Eugene. In German the biography by A. von Arneth (1864) has not been superseded, but no translation has appeared. There are various subsequent German monographs on aspects of Eugene's career, but historical study is handicapped by the fact that during the anti-Napoleonic movement in Austria in 1810-11 a large number of spurious or forged volumes of letters and memoirs attributed to Eugene were produced and obtained a huge circulation. A volume of memoirs written by a Prince Charles de Ligne, concocted out of a French compilation of more or less authentic anecdotes by M. Mauvillon, was translated into English and is still widely extant. The casual reader must be warned against this agreeable forgery. Cf. the interesting discussion by Bruno Böhm in *Die Sammlung der hinterlassenen politischen Schriften des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen: Eine Fälschung des 19ten Jahrhunderts* (1900), especially the appendix.

² Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (1906), p. 259.

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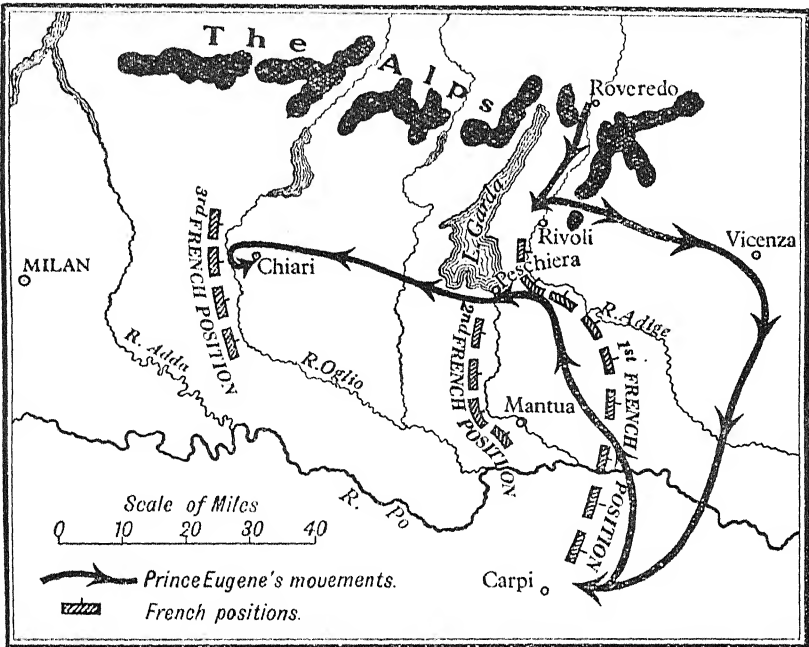
appearance and caused him to be considered unfit for a soldier. Against his will he was forced to enter the Church, and the King nicknamed him *le petit abbé*. Intrigue at Court twice brought about his father's exile. His mother's grief at this misfortune weighed deeply upon the young mind of the Prince, and he is said to have sworn to leave France and never to return except with his sword in his hand. He became the persistent enemy of France throughout his life. After the early death of his father, Eugene, with two of his brothers, migrated to Vienna. His lack of frivolity, which had injured him at Versailles, was a positive advantage to him at the sombre Court of Leopold I. His earliest experience of war was in the fateful year of 1683, when the Turks reached the gates of Vienna. Here his eldest brother was killed. But Eugene made his mark in a strange land. The Emperor liked and admired him. He saw warfare in its most ruthless forms, and fought under the leadership of the famous Charles of Lorraine. After he had become a colonel Eugene abandoned his desire for a principality in Italy, and fixed as his sole ambition the command of the Imperial Army.

Louis, in execution of the Spanish will, had entered Lombardy, and a French army under Catinat occupied Mantua and the valley of the Po, and held the line of the Adige from the foot of Lake Garda to the territories of the Venetian Republic. Catinat also watched in force all the passes leading south-westward from the Tyrol to the plains of Lombardy and Milan. Eugene and his Austrian army, concentrated at Roveredo, had a numerous choice of difficult and dangerous advances against very superior French forces. Only the epitome of his brilliant campaign can be given here. He pretended he would strike right-handed towards Milan, but instead climbed south-eastward over the mountains and debouched into Italy by little-known, unexpected passes. He marched rapidly through Vicenza and violated the neutrality of Venice. By this "expedient not the most delicate"¹ he reached the plains and outwitted Catinat, whose orders strictly enjoined him to respect Venetian neutrality. Catinat,

¹ Charles de Ligne's expression in the spurious memoirs.

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instead of seeking battle with Eugene wherever he might find him, sought to defend the line of the Adige. He spread his troops along a front of sixty miles. Eugene, pouncing upon his right detachment at Carpi on July 9, pierced and turned the French front. Catinat fell back upon the Mincio. Eugene, after defeating him again at Nogara, marched against his other



EUGENE'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY

flank on Lake Garda at Peschiera and drove him back, threatening his communications with Milan. Catinat retreated to the Oglio, and was here superseded by Marshal Villeroy, who had arrived from Flanders. Eugene entrenched himself at Chiari, and repulsed with heavy losses on September 1 Villeroy's attack. He thus established himself in Lombardy and settled down for the winter after a series of manœuvres and combats which in audacity and success suggest Napoleon's campaigns on the same battle-grounds a century later.

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"The King," Cardonnel tells us on July 4,

arrived at the Hague from Margate surprisingly quickly as the wind changed. . . . My Lord Marlborough followed very slow [*i.e.*, from the coast] and got hither last night. His lordship has taken a house in this place where I believe he will make his Chief Residence unless a War call him into Brabant.¹

But the States-General soon put at his disposal the house of Prince Maurice near the King's palace.² In this beautiful building, to be destroyed by fire in 1707, Charles II had feasted on the eve of the Restoration.³ The Mauritshuis now became the centre from which the Grand Alliance was framed. Thither resorted the envoys and plenipotentiaries of many countries. It was the scene of conclaves and negotiations and of the banquets and ceremonies then judged indispensable to high diplomacy. In all this Marlborough excelled. His charm, his tact, his unfailing sagacity, his magnificent appearance, and the fact that the King seemed to confide everything to his hands, gained him immediately a pre-eminent influence. Almost at once he won the regard of the Pensionary Heinsius, and here again began one of those long, unbreakable associations which are characteristic of the great period of his life. From The Hague he could also transact his military affairs and supervise the camps near the frontier, or attend the King at Loo. At the end of August he visited the English troops at Breda and inspected other garrisons, and a month later accompanied William upon a similar tour. At its close he entertained the King and the principal generals at a dinner at Breda in full military state. This was the last time King William was to see an armed camp.

In essence the second Grand Alliance was bound to become another Partition Treaty. Hard pressure had to be put upon the Emperor to reconcile his extortionate demands with the claims of Holland, and thereafter English interests had to be

¹ Cardonnel to Ellis, Under-Secretary of State, Whitehall (must be Hague), July 4/15, 1701 (Add. MSS., 20917, f. 309).

² "The States have lent me Prince Morris's house" (Marlborough to Godolphin, July 19/30, 1701, Blenheim MSS.).

³ See the plate facing p. 540.

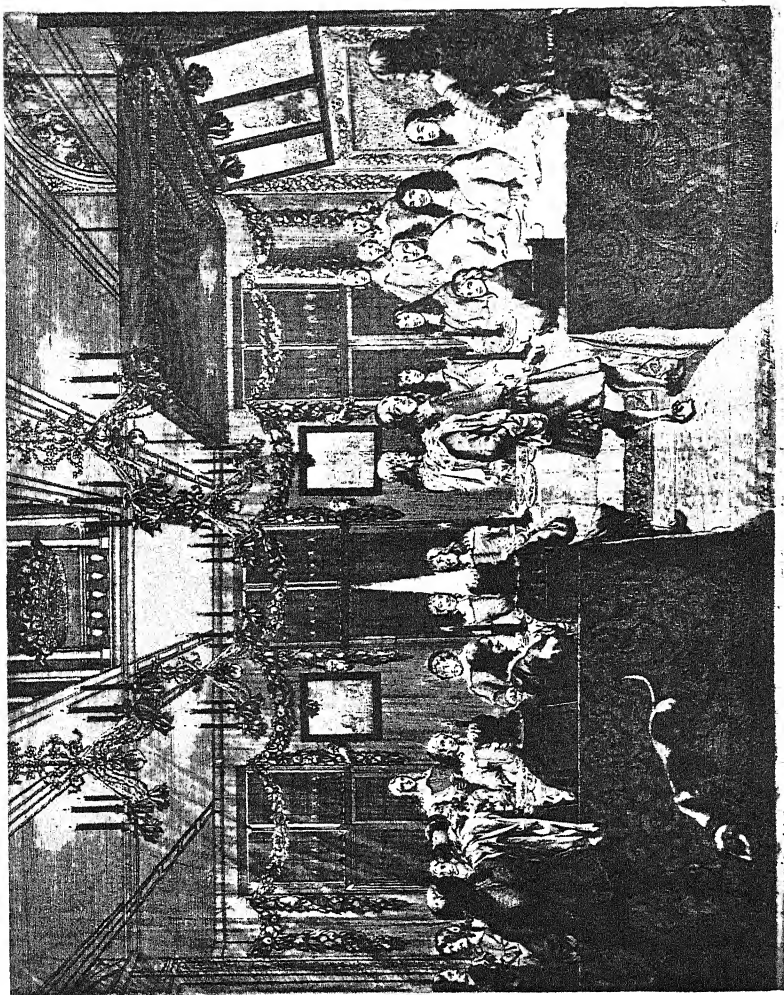
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sustained against both Powers. Marlborough, with the angry debates upon William's Partitions in his ears, was intent to study the susceptibilities of the House of Commons, and also to secure due prominence for the particular kind of buccaneering warfare on the sea and across the oceans which was alone acceptable to Tory hearts. In the end he presented results which reconciled the pride of the Empire, the cautious obstinacy of the Dutch, and the commercial and colonizing appetites of the English. His letter to Godolphin of July 22 gives a clear account of the opening stage.

A great deal of time was spent in the emperor's ministers complaining of the Treaty of Partition, and when we came to the business for which we met, they would have the foundation of the treaty to be for lessening the power of France, and assisting the emperor in his just rights to the monarchy of Spain. But the Pensionary would not consent to anything further, than that the emperor ought to be satisfied with having Flanders, which would be a security to the Dutch, and Milan as a fief of the empire. After four hours' wrangling, the two envoys went away; and then I endeavoured to let the Pensionary see that no treaty of this kind would be acceptable in England, if there were not care taken of the Mediterranean and the West Indies. When I gave the King an account, he was of my mind, so that the Pensionary has promised to use his endeavours with the town of Amsterdam; for they are unwilling to consent to anything more than Flanders and Milan.¹

Although French and Austrian troops were already fighting fiercely in Italy, the last hopes of a general peace were not abandoned. Marlborough had been given a separate set of instructions to enter into negotiations with the Ministers of France and Spain at The Hague. He demanded once again on behalf of the Maritime Powers the withdrawal of the French garrisons from the barrier fortresses, the surrender of "cautionary towns" by the Spaniards to

¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, July 11/22 (Coxe). In another letter of the same date he notes that the King has had one conversation with the French Ambassador "of no great consequence" and left The Hague without speaking to him again in private (Blenheim MSS.).



THE MAURITSHUIS AT THE HAGUE: THE BANQUET TO CHARLES II ON THE
EVE OF THE RESTORATION

On Charles's left is his sister Minette; on his right are his mother, Henrietta Maria, and his brother, James, Duke of York; in front is the young Prince of Orange. Marlborough lived in the Mauritshuis from 1701 until its destruction by fire in 1707.

From a print in the possession of Mr. Ernest Poulter

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Anglo-Dutch control, and the guarantee of "a reasonable satisfaction" for the Emperor out of the Spanish heritage. He seems to have thought it just possible that Eugene's victories in Italy, the process of forming the Grand Alliance at The Hague, and the evident resolve of the Allies to proceed to extremities would oblige Louis to agree in August to the terms he had rejected in March. Soon after his arrival at The Hague he informed D'Avaux of his instructions to *travailler d'un accom[m]odement*.¹ How far he expected success is difficult to decide. "You may know," he wrote to Godolphin,² "as much of peace and war as we do here, for the whole depends upon the French, for if they will not give a reasonable satisfaction to the Emperor, you know what the consequence of that will be." The issue was soon decided. The French King refused to consider the Emperor's demands, or even to admit to a conference the Ambassador of a Power with whom, though not formally at war, his troops were already engaged. On August 5 d'Avaux left The Hague for Paris.

Heavy fighting might now begin in the Netherlands at any moment. Boufflers and Villeroy were known to be consulting at Namur. The utmost vigilance was required. Already on August 1 Marlborough had written to Sarah, who was eager to join him at The Hague :

DIEREN

August 1

*I came on Wednesday night to Loo, and yesterday to this place, where I found the King ill of his knee. We all hope here it's the gout, and I think it is, but not in that violent degree that others have it. He is now better, and it is to be hoped he will not continue long lame, for the King of France has recalled his ambassador from the Hague, so that now we shall quickly see if he will begin the war, which makes me with a good deal of uneasiness tell you that you must defer your kind thoughts of a journey to this country until I can let you know a little more certainly how I shall be disposed of, for our actions now must be governed by what France will think fit to do.

¹ D'Avaux to Louis XIV, August 4, 1701 (Legrelle, *La Diplomatie française et la Succession de l'Espagne*, v, 146).

² July 18/29, 1701, Blenheim MSS.

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On the 12th he wrote to Brydges :

HAGUE
August 12, 1701

*S^r.

. . . I shall lose no opportunity of behaving myself towards you as one friend should towards another. We are here in very great expectation of the success that may be in Italy, being persuaded that the French will be reasonable, or otherwise according to what shall happen there. On this side it does not look as if there would be any action, this season, notwithstanding here is at least one hundred thousand men of a side which makes the frontier towns much crowded, although we have two camps. The English have orders to be in readiness to march, but I hope his Majesty will have the goodness not to draw them into the field, unless there should be an absolute necessity, the greatest part of the men being new raised.¹

When, on the 18th, he learned that Villeroy had left for Italy he felt sure that France had abandoned any thought of opening a campaign in Flanders during the autumn of 1701. Forthwith he allowed Sarah to come over for the greatest day his life had yet seen. On September 7, 1701, he signed alone for England the main treaty with the Empire and Holland by which the three Powers bound themselves to exact their terms from France by negotiations or arms. Sarah was present at his side in his hour of triumph. She was fêted by the brilliant throng assembled for that famous event. She even received a visit from "Caliban" at Loo.²

Great moderation characterized the stipulations of the allies. They acquiesced in the rule of Philip V over Spain and the Spanish Indies, provided that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united. The Emperor was to secure Milan, Naples, Sicily, the Spanish Mediterranean islands, together with Belgium and Luxembourg. But these last two, under the sovereignty of Austria, were to be so organized as to serve "as a fence and rampart, commonly called a barrier, separating and keeping off France

¹ Stowe MSS., 58, i, 25 (Huntington Library).

² "Lady Marlborough came to Loo on Saturday evening and had the honour of a visit from the King in her apartment."—Cardonnel to Ellis, October 10/21, 1701, Add. MSS., 20917, f. 358.

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from the United provinces." This basis being settled, the minor states were urged by subsidies provided by England and Holland and by other inducements to join the alliance, and with each a separate agreement was made. The recognition of the Elector of Brandenburg as King of Prussia was the price reluctantly paid by the Emperor in return for his adhesion.

The case of Sweden was special. The remarkable military caste which had developed in this small but virile northern kingdom had impressed itself upon Europe since the days of Gustavus Adolphus, and now found itself headed by a warrior prince who revived in dramatic guise the image of his famous grandfather. Charles XII had just extorted peace from Denmark and Poland by an audacious campaign, and had defeated Russia at surprising odds in the battle of Narva. He and his redoubtable mercenaries were amenable to flattery and gold. Marlborough used both with deftness. The impulsive, passionate character of Charles XII made the negotiations "a very ticklish business."¹ The natural bias of the Swedes since the time of Gustavus Adolphus was Francophile and anti-Austrian. Marlborough achieved in 1701 what he was to repeat in 1707. He kept Charles XII and his army out of Western and Central Europe. The French were also in the market with competing bribes of money; but the Englishman prevailed. On September 26 he could write to Godolphin, "I have this evening signed the Swedish Treaty. . . . I was convinced if I had not done it, the French moneys must have been accepted." The treaty was to be ratified within six weeks. Marlborough, with his eye on the House of Commons, had deliberately withheld his signature of the main treaty, as well as of the separate treaty between England and Holland, till after they had been submitted to the Ministry at home. In the Swedish case alone did he consider it necessary to sign promptly without reference even to the Lords Justices in England. The Swedish treaty cleared the path of Denmark. The Danes, thus freed from the peril at their gates, were able

¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, August 26, Blenheim MSS.

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to join the Alliance upon adequate gratifications with 5000 troops at once and 20,000 in prospect. Thus while the French were gathering their forces in Belgium and Luxembourg the army which was to meet them in the spring, raised and bound together by the wealth of the Maritime Powers, came swiftly into being under the hand of its future leader.

The territorial objectives of the war having been at length agreed, the three principals proceeded to discuss the *dénombrement*. It was finally settled that the Empire should bring into the field against France 82,000 men, the Dutch 100,000, and the English 40,000, together with an equal number for the fleet. Archdeacon Coxe had the misfortune to leave out a nought from the Dutch total, which he stated at no more than 10,000 men. This obvious slip or misprint has ever since been dutifully copied by many historians and biographers.¹ Thus easily do chains of error trail link after link through history. The following hitherto unpublished letter from Marlborough to Godolphin sent after the conclusion of the treaty makes the position clear :²

HAGUE
Sept. 6/17, 1701

*We have had the wind so contrary, that I believe the treaty which I have sent is not yet arrived. The Emperor's Minister has given the number of his Master's troops, which amounts in all to one hundred, and eight thousand men, of which they will be obliged to send four score and two thousand to act against France, as we shall agree ; the rest must continue in Hungary, and their garrisons. The number of Dutch troops are near one hundred thousand, besides what they send to sea, so that it will be my part now to speak for England, and though I am fully resolved not to finish this matter till the Parliament meets, yet I must say something, and I desire to know your opinion, if I should not acquaint the Lords Justices, and desire their directions. The King is very desirous to have me conclude the Treaty with the King of Prussia. I shall give all the obstructions

¹ E.g. Wolsley, ii, 400 ; Taylor, i, 45 ; Atkinson, 160.

² The exact figures are also to be found in the *C.J.*, xiii, 64-65. The Emperor was to provide sixty-six regiments of foot and twenty-four of horse, the Dutch eighty-two foot and twenty horse, the English thirty-three foot and seven horse. The Commons agreed to these proportions on January 10, 1702.

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I can to its dispatch, being persuaded it would be for the best, if it were not signed till Parliament were acquainted with it, so that I must desire your assistance, for I am afraid it will be impossible to avoid the agreeing, so as to send it to the Lords Justices, for their approbation; but I believe that I may be so near the time of Parliament meeting, that I hope you will advise, it should not be signed till after their meeting. I wrote a very long letter to you by the last post, of my thoughts concerning the [dissolution of] Parliament. If you should be of my mind I would press that matter so, as that I hope it might prevent the confusion, I think a new Parliament might occasion.

He adds a passage coming strangely from a man upon whom the beams of fortune, long withheld, now shone so brightly.

I must own to you that I have a great many melancholy thoughts, and am very much of the opinion that nobody can be very happy that is in business. However I can't hinder being so selfish, as to wish you may not have that ease of being out, as long as I must be employed, which can't be long if you should have reason to be dissatisfied, which makes me beg in friendship you will take no resolutions till I have the happiness of seeing you.

I am afraid Lady Marlborough has stayed two days too long, for the wind that has been so very fair is now come into the East. . . .

It will be seen that Marlborough's fear of offending Parliament by finally deciding the treaties without their approval was even more acute where the quota of British troops was concerned. No more legible measure of the forces then at work in England can be found than their effect at this time upon his experienced judgment. Expressions of extravagant vehemence leap from his cool, sober, matter-of-fact mind: "I had much rather be buried alive than be the fatal instrument of such misfortunes"; "Before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing." Lord Wolseley sees in this an indication that he was already turning Whig. But this entirely misreads the situation. Marlborough was thinking more of his Tory friends than of the Whigs. He knew the enormous difficulty of bringing the Tories into the war, and

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how readily they would bridle at any constitutional breach. The Whigs, though even more constitutionally minded, wanted the war and were not inclined to be too particular.

On October 3 he writes to Godolphin :

*. . . You will excuse me that I trouble you again about the *dénombrement*. I have made use of the argument, that is very natural for England, which is that their [England's] expense at sea must be great. This argument is of more use to me when I speak to the Imperialists, than with the Pensioner ; for the latter tells me, that they shall be willing to furnish at sea the same proportions as they did the last war, which was three in eight ; and since their land forces are greater than they were the last war, the people here might reasonably expect that ours might not be less. I continue still of the opinion that it would be fatal to have this settled anywhere but in Parliament ; but on the other hand I ought to say something to them, and I should be glad to know if I might not endeavour to make them not expect more than one half of what they had the last war. For aught I know, this may be more than England will care to do ; but I hear no other language here, than that this war must be carried with more vigour than the last, if we ever hope to see a good end of it ; and I confess it is so much my own opinion, that I hope we shall do our utmost ; what that is, you and 16 [Hedges?] are much properer judges than I am. When the King speaks to you of this matter, I beg you will be positive in the opinion that it is of the last consequence [not] to do any thing in it, but in Parliament. That which makes me the more pressing in this of the *dénombrement* is that the Pensioner is inclined to have it done before the Parl meets ; which I think would be destruction.¹

And, on the same day, to Hedges, one of the Secretaries of State :

*. . . I can't let this go without giving you some account as to my thoughts concerning the *dénombrement* and I do with all my heart wish that you and I may not differ in this matter, which I take to be of the last consequence. . . . Count Ratisloe [Wratislaw] insists that we should furnish the same number of troops we did the last war, his Master having a greater army

¹ This and the following four letters in this chapter are printed from the originals at Blenheim.

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than at any time the last war. The Dutch with a great deal more reason think it would be very hard if our numbers should be much less than they were the last war, since theirs are greater. . . .

Now that I have said this, I will let you know the method I could wish the King would be pleased to take, which is very plainly to let Parliament know what the Emperor and the Dutch are to furnish, and at the same time to give his own opinion very frankly, and that by the 24 of Nov. our style, which is the day the two months ends mentioned in the treaty with the Emperor, he is obliged to fix this *dénombrement*. I think by this method we shall have the Parliament on our side, by which we shall gain a greater number of men than the other way. Were I with you I could say a great deal upon this subject, for I am so very fully persuaded that if the King should be prevailed upon to settle this by his own authority, that we shall never see a quiet day more in England, and consequently not only ruin our selves, but also undo the liberties of Europe ; for if the King and Parliament begin with a dispute, France will give what Laws she pleases. I am sure I had much rather be buried alive than be the fatal instrument of such misfortunes. I have opened myself very freely to you, but desire nobody else may know it.

Again, on the 21st he wrote to Godolphin :

*It is very plain to me that the Pensioner continues his opinion, that I ought to finish the *dénombrement* before the meeting of Parliament. I have been so positive that he despairs of prevailing upon me ; but I am afraid he hopes the King may be able, when he comes to England, to persuade yourself and the Cabinet Council to it, so that I may have orders sent me, believing that I should then make no difficulty ; but I do assure you that I am so persuaded that the doing of this, by his Majesty's authority, would prove so fatal to himself and the kingdom, that I should desire to be recalled ; for, before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing.

While all these preparations resounded upon the anvil of Europe, both sides, though yielding nothing further, nevertheless still hoped against hope for peace. As so often happens in world affairs, and particularly in English affairs, a sense of dire necessity grows in men's minds and yet they

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shrink from action. The atmosphere is loaded with inflammable gas : but a flash is needed to produce the explosion.

On September 16, 1701, James II died. Louis visited in state his deathbed at Saint-Germains. While the unhappy exile was in the stertorous breathing which often precedes the flight of the soul, the Grand Monarch announced to the shadow Court that he recognized his son as King of England and would ever sustain his rights. Chivalry, vanity, and a recklessness born of the prolonged suspense had impelled Louis to this most imprudent act. He upheld it in face of the solid opposition of his Cabinet. Its consequences surprised him beyond measure. All England was roused by the insult to her independence. The Act of Settlement had decreed the succession of the crown. The Treaty of Ryswick had bound Louis not only in formal terms, but by a gentleman's agreement, to recognize and not to molest William III as King. The domestic law of England was outraged by the arrogance, and her treaty rights violated by the perfidy, of the French despot. Whigs and Tories vied with one another in Parliament in resenting the affront. Was England, then, a vassal of France on whom a king could be imposed and despite all plighted faith? The whole nation became resolute for war. Marlborough's treaties, shaped and presented with so much Parliamentary understanding, were acclaimed ; ample supplies were tendered to the Crown. King William saw his moment had come. Forthwith upon the news he recalled his Ambassador from Paris and dismissed Tallard from St James's. Now also was the time to rid himself of the Tory Party, which had used him so ill and in their purblind folly had tied his hands till all seemed ruined. Now was the time to hale before the bar of an awakened nation those truculent, pigheaded Commoners who had so provedly misjudged the public interest. The King saw his way to a sound Whig Parliament for the vigorous waging of war. Whispers of Dissolution pervaded the high circles of Court and politics.

Marlborough watched the King attentively. He read his mind and dreaded his purpose. The expulsion of the Tories

Hague Oct: 24. 1701

Since last night the Wind is changed,
so that the King has sent Directions
for the Proceeding the Port. for a weeke
and so on till he shall arrive; if the
wind should come faire he is resolv'd
to Embark to morrow, but the Seamen
think it will not be till the follo^wing

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in a disastrous war-fever election would undermine all the power and credit he had acquired in these spacious months. Moreover, he judged better than the King the inherent strength of Tory England. Even taken at so great a disadvantage, the Tories would be strong enough to wreck, if they could not rule. Only the peace party could draw the sword of England. A Whig triumph at the polls threatened a divided nation in the war. He used all his arts to dissuade William from the course upon which he saw him bent. The King, though filled with admiration at the capacity of his lieutenant, discounted his advice as interested, and held to his design. Marlborough obtained a long, reasoned letter from Godolphin extolling the Tory Parliament and its alacrity for war. He read it to William :

* Yours of the 3/14 surprises me extremely. To hear that on that side of the water the king hears no discourse but of a new parliament is an amazing thing, especially if one considers the particulars of what this parliament has done and how they left the public affairs when they parted. They provided, while they were in expectation only that a War might come on, the greatest Supplies that ever were given when the Kingdom was not in actual war, and those Supplies upon the best funds that ever were given, because they were such as could not create a deficiency, and they made an Address to the king toward the end of the session, of which by the way he was very sensible at that time and thanked them very heartily for it, to desire him to enter into Alliance[s] for the good of Europe and to assure him they would stand by him & support him in such Alliances as he should think fit to make : the plain Consequence of which address was and is to make him the arbiter of war or peace, and to trust the matter entirely in his hands.¹

The King, so intimate and open with Marlborough in all the rest of the great affair, became cold and unresponsive. Godolphin, feeling his position as a Tory Minister about to be destroyed, wished to resign. Marlborough exhorted him to remain. He was himself concerned to return with the King to England and not to lose touch with him for a day ;

¹ Extract : the letter is much longer.

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but William shook him off. He did not mean to be persuaded. "I have but just time to tell you," wrote Marlborough about September 18, "that as the king went into his coach he told me that he would write to me, by which I understand that I am not to stir from hence till I hear from him. . . ." ¹ The King quitted Holland suddenly, leaving Marlborough thus chained to his post. Several weeks passed before the efforts of Godolphin and Albemarle secured him permission to come home. On the very day his letter of recall arrived Marlborough learned that Parliament was dissolved and that Godolphin had resolved to resign.

Other anxieties, apparently serious, had arisen before William's departure about the ceremonial to be observed upon King James's death.

Loo

September 16/27, 1701

* The King just took notice to me of the mourning and commanded me to write to the Princess to let her know that he should mourn for King James, but that he intended to put himself his Coaches and Liveries in mourning but not his apartments, and that he desired the Princess would do the same, by which he meant she should not put St James's in mourning; so that if she had thoughts of it, you see it can't be. So that you will be pleased to give my humble duty to her Highness, and that I beg she will give you leave to turn this business so as that it may be well taken of the king, and consequently do her Highness good in England. For if after this she should put her house in mourning, for God's sake think what an outcry it would make in England. ²

The election belied King William's hopes. Although a cluster of his personal assailants and many Jacobites lost their seats in the Whig attack, the Tories were found to have, as Marlborough had predicted, a very solid core. They actually carried Harley back to the Speaker's chair in the new Parliament by a majority of four. The two parties were so even that, for all their hatred, they could scarcely maul one another. This in itself was a gain; but, on the other hand, the Tory rage against the King was mortal. They held that he had

¹ Marlborough to Godolphin, September 1701.

² Marlborough to Godolphin.



WILLIAM III : THE LAST PHASE

Godfrey Schalcken

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

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flung them to the country wrongfully within a year of their return at a time when they were giving him loyal and resolute support. He had played a party trick upon them, and the trick had failed. They never forgave him; they longed for his death. Nevertheless they joined with the Whigs in supporting his war.

The turn of affairs had brought about a sensible change in Marlborough's political position. In spite of Godolphin's demand to resign, the Tory Ministry had been kept by the King till he could see the election results. From his point of view this half-measure was a mistake, for the party in power had great influence upon the poll. After the results were known, the King felt himself strong enough to get rid of the Tories. He sent Rochester packing and released Godolphin. Marlborough's case was that of a man all of whose colleagues have been dismissed, but who has himself become detached from their fortunes by the importance of a foreign mission for which all parties judge him supremely fitted. Moreover, although he had worked consistently in the Tory interest and kept all his labels unchanged, he had become in fact the main-spring of the Whig policy in Europe. Thus both parties looked to him with regard and recognized, however grudgingly, that he was above their warfare. This was not the result of calculation on his part, for the happenings had been often contrary to his wishes and almost entirely beyond his control. Events had detached him from his party and left him, without partisan reproach, independent on the hub of affairs. Henceforward he ceased gradually to be a party man, though still of Tory hue. We shall see him try long and hard to keep this neutral footing until he is driven through coalition to the Whigs and finally destroyed by the revengeful Tories.

Meanwhile he walked delicately. Davenant, hitherto a pro-French Tory pamphleteer, had turned with the tide, and now urged men to lay aside their party feelings for the good of the public and in face of the common enemy. Before he quitted The Hague Marlborough wrote to Brydges¹ praising

¹ Marlborough to Brydges, November 14/25, 1701, Huntington Library MSS.

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Davenant's pamphlet and hoping that he would persuade people to take the necessary measures against France. On January 27 the Dutch envoy in England mentions the strength of the Tories in the new House, and relates how Marlborough, Godolphin, and Rooke, the Admiral, were present at a party meeting in Sir Edward Seymour's house. But three days later he notes of Marlborough, "Having no longer Rochester and Godolphin to support him in the Council, he has to trim even more cleverly between both sides."¹ In spite of the change of Government, Marlborough continued to conduct English foreign policy as the King's agent, and two of his conversations with Wratislaw, the Austrian Ambassador, have been preserved.

Parliament on Tory initiative had asked the King to take steps to obtain the addition to the Grand Alliance of an article to the effect that no peace should be concluded with France until the King and the nation had received satisfaction for the great injury done to them by the French King in the recognition and proclamation of the pretended Prince of Wales as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Marlborough, at the King's desire, opened the matter to Wratislaw.

Wratislaw said there was no need for a special article of the kind suggested as the Emperor had already in the Alliance undertaken such an obligation generally. Marlborough replied that that was not sufficient. The separate article was necessary to bring England into the war as a principal. By acceding to the request the Emperor would put England under an obligation to him, and convince her that her well-being depended upon his. The Emperor would also put the Princess Anne under an obligation to him, and thereby compel her, should the King die during the war, to intervene with all her power in the Emperor's interest. Wratislaw maintained that, on the contrary, French policy would make use of such an article to embroil the Emperor with the Papacy and all the Catholic Powers. Marlborough answered that the matter had nothing to do with religion. The succession

¹ "Ce qu'on en peut dire est que, se menageant en habile homme des deux costes, il est a croire que n'ayant plus dans le conseil le comte de Rochester et myl[ord] Godolphin pour l'appuyer, il se menagera encore davantage pour bien faire." (Add. MSS., 17677, xx, ff. 190 *verso*, 198 *verso*.)

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in England had previously been determined by legislation; the Emperor need only bind himself not to admit that France could break the laws of England. Care would be taken so to frame the article as not to touch the religious question.¹

An agreement was reached accordingly.

Wratislaw on February 19 had a lengthy conversation with William III which left him in perplexity. He asked Marlborough confidentially the next day for a more precise explanation of what was troubling the King.

Marlborough said, "The King is greatly perturbed as to the possibility of a French attack in full force on Holland. Further he wants a vigorous campaign on all sides, the sight of which may maintain the readiness of the republic to continue to bear its heavy burden. I therefore strongly advise against a detachment to Naples. But if this cannot be dropped I say to you—in the strictest confidence and without the previous knowledge of the King—that the strengthening of the army of Prince Eugene must not be neglected. For from the general point of view it would be less harmful for the King to lose some battle than for Prince Eugene to be overthrown. If this reinforcement [of Prince Eugene] is by auxiliary troops the King would have little to complain of. But he requires the actual Imperial forces to be on the Rhine, so as to be assured on the one hand that the King of the Romans (Joseph) will appear in the field, and on the other that the Emperor, and not the [German] Princes, is master in the empire."²

This advice is curious. Marlborough was himself almost certain to command in the north, and yet he recognizes that a defeat there would do less harm to the common cause than the destruction of Prince Eugene in the south, and does not hesitate to weaken the main theatre for the sake of the wisest general dispositions.

We have one more impression of him on the eve of his power. The gathering together of so many threads and resources in the hands of a single man of known abilities and ambition

¹ Wratislaw's report from London of January 13/24, 1702; translated from Klopp, ix, 457.

² Wratislaw's report from London of Feb. 24/March 7, 1702; translated from Klopp, ix, 479.

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aroused fierce jealousies in that world of proud magnates ; and all foresaw that the King's death and the accession of Anne would make Marlborough virtual master of England. To the Tories this was not unwelcome. They thought they saw in it the ascendancy of their party. For this very reason the Whigs were alarmed. Although they realized that Marlborough held the Whig view of foreign policy, although his wife was an ardent Whig, although Sunderland probably laboured to reassure them, yet the Whigs could not regard the arrival of Marlborough at the supreme direction of affairs as other than the triumph of a Tory chief serving a Tory Queen. Some of their leaders entertained the idea of passing over the Princess Anne and of bringing the Elector of Hanover to the throne. The Dukes of Bolton and Newcastle pressed Lord Dartmouth to join in such a plot. Marlborough, whose sources of information were extensive, heard of this. He questioned Dartmouth, the son of his old friend Legge, who replied that he knew of the proposal, but did not regard it seriously. Marlborough declared that the plot existed, and, with a fierce flash unusual in him, exclaimed, "But, by God, if ever they attempt it, we would walk over their bellies !"¹ This unwonted violence may well have been calculated. He was so situated that he could certainly have used the Army as well as the Tory Party to resist any such design, and he no doubt wished this to be well understood. The prize long awaited was near, and he would not be baulked of it.

The second Grand Alliance now formed must have seemed a desperate venture to those whose minds were seared by the ill-fortune of William's eight-years war. How vain had been that struggle ! How hard to gain any advantage over the mighty central power of France ! Hardly a trophy had been won from all that bitter toil. France, single-handed, had fought Europe and emerged wearied but unbeaten. In the six years of peace she had regained without a shot fired all the fortresses and territory so stubbornly disputed. But

¹ Burnet, v, 540 n.

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now the widest empire in the world was withdrawn from the Alliance and added to the resources of its antagonists. Spain had changed sides, and with Spain not only the Indies, South America, and the whole of Italy, but the cockpit of Europe—Belgium and Luxembourg—and even Portugal. Savoy, the deserter, still rested with France. Cologne was also now a French ally. Bavaria, constant to the end in the last war, was to be with France in the new struggle. The Maritime Powers had scarcely a friendly port beyond their coasts. The New World was almost barred against them. The Mediterranean had become in effect a French lake. South of Plymouth no fortified harbour lay open to their ships. They had their superior fleets, but no bases which would carry them to the inland sea. On land the whole Dutch barrier had passed into French hands. Instead of being the rampart of Holland, it had become the sallyport of France. Louis, occupying the Archbishoprics of Cologne and Trèves, was master of the Meuse and of the Lower Rhine. He held all the Channel ports, and had entrenched himself from Namur through Antwerp to the sea. His armies ranged through the region east of the Meuse to the Dutch frontier. His winter dispositions disclosed his intention in the spring campaign to renew the invasion of Holland along the same routes which had led almost to its subjugation in 1672. A terrible front of fortresses, bristling with cannon, crammed with troops and supplies, betokened the approaching onslaught. The Dutch cowered behind inundations and their remaining strongholds. Lastly, the transference of Bavaria to the side of France laid the very heart of the Empire open to French invasion. The Hungarians were still in revolt, and the Turks once more afoot. In every element of strategy by sea or by land, as well as in the extent of territory and population, Louis was twice as strong at the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession as he had been at the Peace of Ryswick. One final adverse contrast must be noticed. The Papacy had changed sides. Clement XI had abandoned the policy of Innocent XI. He espoused the cause of the Great King. He sent his congratulations to Philip V, and granted him subsidies from

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Spanish ecclesiastical property. He lived to repent his error. The scale of the new war was turned by the genius of one man. One single will outweighed all these fearful inequalities, and built out of the halved and defeated fragments of William's wars a structure of surpassing success under the leadership of England.

In the debates of the English Parliament, in the councils of the English Ministers, in the plenipotentiary powers of the English Ambassadors and in the daily commands of the English general is contained the sum of the political history of the War of the Spanish Succession.¹

"The little gentleman in black velvet," the hero for a spell of so many enthusiastic toasts, now intervened. On February 20, the day after his conversation with Wratishaw, William was riding in the park round Hampton Court on Sorrel, a favourite horse said to have once belonged to Sir John Fenwick. Sorrel stumbled in the new workings of a mole, and the King was thrown. The broken collar-bone might well have mended, but in his failing health the accident opened the door to a troop of lurking foes. Complications set in, and after a fortnight it was evident to him and to all who saw him that death was at hand. He transacted business to the end. His interest in the world drama for which he had set the stage, on which the curtain was about to rise, lighted his mind as the shadows closed upon him. He received the reports of his gathering armies and followed the business of both his Parliaments. He grieved to quit the themes and combinations which had been the labour and the passion of his life. They were now approaching their dread climax. But he must go. Mr Valiant had his summons. "My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder."² He

¹ Carl van Noorden, *Europäische Geschichte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, Einleitung.

² *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

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had his consolation. He saw with eagle eye the approach of a reign and Government in England which would maintain the cause in which his strength had been spent. He saw the only man to whom in war or policy, in the intricate convolutions of European diplomacy, in the party turmoil of England, or amid the hazards of the battlefield, he could bequeath the awful yet unescapable task. He had made his preparations deliberately to pass his leadership to a new champion of the Protestant faith and the liberties of Europe. In his last years he had woven Marlborough into the whole texture of his combinations and policy. In his last hours he commended him to his successor as the fittest man in the realm to guide her councils and lead her armies. William died at fifty-two worn out by his labours. Marlborough at the same age strode forward upon those ten years of unbroken victory with which our future chapters will be mainly concerned.

APPENDIX

I

A VINDICATION OF THE CONDUCT OF THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH BY GILBERT BURNET, BISHOP OF SALISBURY (c. 1710)

[The original is at Blenheim and is endorsed by the Duchess of Marlborough :

this was put together from my papers by the Bishop of Salisbury not well don.

to be put to the papers at the lodge.

There is a note by Archdeacon Coxe :

It was afterwards altered and enlarged by Mr St Priest who accompanied the Duke abroad, and was employed by the Duchess in arranging her papers. He was recommended by Dr Hare. Part of the original draught submitted to Mr Walpole in 1711 or 12 was drawn up or corrected by Mr Manwaring.

For some observations on these drafts see the introduction to *Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, edited by William King (1930). St Priest's draft is at Blenheim, and a copy in the British Museum. Various other drafts are also at Blenheim. The following is the introduction only. The incidents related in the body of the text are those which figure with greater or less prominence in the published version of Sarah's *Conduct*.]

THE Writting of books is looked upon, as an Imployment not fit for our Sex : and if Some have succeeded well in it, others have exposed themselves by it too much, to Encourage a woman to venture on being an Author : but it will appear more unusual for me to write so copiously, as I fear, I may be forced to doe, to tell my own Story, especially when it will seem to carry reflexions wher one owes respect ; But since I am like to leave behind me a Posterity, that is already distinguished by rank, and Estate, and that may branch out into more families, I am under some obligation to let them know,

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by what principalls, and Measures, I governed my selfe under a most envied favour, that I seemed to Engrosse for about twenty yeares without a Rivall, and to let them know at the same time by what meanes and by what accident I lost it.

I alwaies knew that favour was held by a very uncertain tenure, and tho I confess I did not thinke my selfe in much danger of loseing it, and especially by the person, that undermined me, yet I thought, I had governed my selfe with such sincerity, and so much Caution, that when the turn of favour should come, I should fall gently, and be decently dismisst ; but it has fallen out far otherwise ; and as I have met with a treatment as litle looked for as deserved, so I have been pursued with so much Malice, falsehood and Calumny, and so many papers and bookes have mentioned me with as much Virulency, as Injustice, while I have with a Patience, that was both silent and respectfull, born so much that many I fancy thinke mee, as guilty, as my enimies would represent me, because of my bearing with a *becoming submission* such a vent, as has given to the inveterate Spleen of my enimies. The decencies of a Subject, *as well as the regards I owe as a Wife, and a Mother, have* had so much power over me, that I have long sate quiet under a Usage, that in another part of my life, I could not so easily have submitted to.

But as I owed it to my Selfe, so I owed it in a particular manner to all, that shall decend from me, to let them see, how little I deserved those characters, that have been bestowed on me, with as much confidence, as if those who defamed me, had full prove in their hands to vouch for them ; but since I do this so late, I am resolved to doe it and to shew Vouchers for all I have to say in my own Justification, if unkind Inferences are made from it by opening things, that some may wish had remained still hid, those only are to blame, who not contented in useing me Ill, have set so many mercenary scriblers upon me, to run me down with noise, and impudence, as if I had robbed both the Queen and the nation, and had not only deserved very Ill, but had been deeply Engaged in very ill designs against both Church and State, the Crown and country. I writte not my own vindication only to tell my own Story with truth, and evidence to Clear my Selfe, and to Justifie my own conduct, I writte with a farther designe to Instruct others, who may learn somewhat by it, tho at my Cost. I was born with a inbred Love to my Country, I hated tyranny by nature before I had read a Line upon the Subject : I thought mankind was born free, and that Princes were ordained to make their people happy ;

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so I had alwaies In me an Invinceable aversion to Slavery, and to flattery, I also hated Popery, before I had ever looked into a booke of divinity : I thought alwaies, that the best way of Serving Princes, was to be true, & faithfull to them, and to Speake on all occasions to them without flattery, or dissimulation : this was laid in me by nature, as it became In time rooted in me by principle and as I hated flatterers, as Persons, that were betraying the Prince, whom they studied to please, so I thought in religion, it was the same thing, with relation to Almighty God, and truth and justice, purity, good nature, and Charity were the best characters of religion ; and I looked on those, who without any regard to these things, were constant to many Prayers, and Sacraments, as the Same Sort of people in religion, that flatterers were in Courts betrayers of the Prince and reproaches to a Court. Having had a much larger Share of Experience then might seem to belong to my yeares, I thought *it would be no unacceptable entertainment to the world*, to give some account of my Selfe, which I will doe with a Sincerity, that shall not have so much as the least mixture of art or dissimulation in it ; where the particular instances are such as may seem to want more prooffe, then my single word, I will mixe such proofs as shall take away even the possibility of doubting the truth of the revelation I am to give of my concerns. I doe not think the world ought to be troubled with impertinent stories I shall only insist on what was publike and fit to be known and that may be of some use and Instruction to others.

I came extream young into the Court and had the luck to be liked by manny in it but by none more particularly than the Queen who took such pleasure in my Company that as she had me much about her so upon her marriage she prevailed with her Father that I should be a Lady of her Bedchamber. Her Court was so odly composed that it was no extraordinary thing for me to be before them all in her favour, and confidence, this grew upon me to as high a degree, as was possible, *to all, that was passionately fond and tender*, nothing stood in my way, nothing was hard for me. I thought my Selfe (all others thought it too) that I was as secure in a continuance of a high degree of favour, as ever any person was. I upon such an advancement considered what I ought to do in order to deserve and to maintain it. The great principle I laid down in my self was to serve Her with an absolut fidelity and a constant zeal. But by fidelity I did not only mean not to betray her, not to discover her secrets, but to be true to her in every thing she

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trusted me with : but to avoid everything, that looked like dissimulation, and flattery, even tho I saw it might displease her ; I was convinced that Princes were ruined by flatterers : I carried this so far, as to think it was a part of flattery, not to tell her every thing that was in any sort amisse in her. I saw poor K. James ruined by this that nobody would honestly tell him of his danger until it was past recovery : and that for fear of displeasing him. I therefore resolved to say every thing, that I thought concerned her to know, whom I served, with as much *affection*, as fidelity. I once thought that this would be for ever as acceptable to her as I found it had been for many years. I know I could have found a good excuse, when I had once honestly discharged my conscience to her, to have been after that silent, since it was like to have no other effect but to lose her favour : but I had that zeal for her, and for her true Interest, that I could not temper it, nor keep it within bounds. I confess many other considerations concurred to heighten my zeal. I could not think how measures taken and persons trusted, who were in the Interest of the Pretender, this I knew must end either in the ruin of the Nation, or in such convulsions to prevent it as might have very dreadful Consequences, which I had good reason to thinke, would be fatall to L. Marlborough and his family. I therefore studied to prevent this with a zeal that was very honest, tho perhaps at some times it might seem too hot, and earnest, and upon this foundation it was, that my Credit lessened by degrees yet it was so long before I suspected I had a secret enemy that was under trust betraying me that I was past helping before I apprehended it. For as I was not only honest but open and frank perhaps to a fault, that I could not deceive, nor dissemble with any ; so I had the same good opinion of those, who were severally at work to break my Interest, and knowing I had in so eminent a degree saved, and raised the whole family out of ruin and beggary, I could not think that there was such falsehood and Ingratitude in the world, as I found to be among them. I looked long on the progress of a favour, to which I had laid the foundation with a secret satisfaction ; when I found I had put one about the Queen, who was become so acceptable to her. This was the chieffe maxime I had laid down to my self in the management of the high favour, I was in, and as I resolved to maintain it in the most dangerous part of it, which has had such an effect on me, it was no hard matter for me to maintain it in every other thing. My adherence so steadily to her Interest in the matter of the act of Parliament for her, in the late reign against

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the opinion of many, that advised to the contrary, was the greatest Instance, that I was capable of shewing it in. this drew after it not only the Losse of the favour of a King and Queen, that were like to outlive her, but were the true occasion of L. Marlboroughs disgrace, and of all that followed upon it, during so many years. I had as good reason to think I could have insinuated my selfe into Queen Mary's favour as any body about Court and I am well assured that if I could have brought the Princesse to an Absolute dependance upon Her nothing would have been denied me that I could have asked for my selfe or my family; but I would have sacrificed my life and family rather than have advised the (now) Queen to any thing that I thought not fit for her to submit to. I say no more of that matter because I have writ a particular account of that whole transaction very fully and very impartially to which I referre the world. I have been taxed as if I had made great advantages by secret practise of the Queens favour both before her coming to the Crown and since that time, and indeed this is so common in all, who have favour at Court that I doe not wonder, that it should be soe easily believed of me but as I had nothing from the Queen when she was Princesse but one 1000£ a year, besides that she assisted me with 10000£ towards the marrying my two Eldest daughters, so I have said it so often since the losse of her favour that it may be well believed, since nobody has been found out wicked enough to make a false story of me, yet a true one must have been discovered, that I never sold her favour, nor made any advantage by any place or pension that I promised to any, during the whole time of my favour. I am in this point in open defiance with all the world. I accepted very thankfully the places, that the Queen gave me, but tho she bid me lay by 2000£ a year out of the Privy purse for my own use, I desired to be excused and did it not. Upon the Queens coming to the Crown I formed the best scheme I could of the ladies of the Bed-chamber, without any other regard, but that I thought they were the properest persons to serve Her in the Bedchamber. I had the Robes in which I took great care to save the Queen much money by making punctual payments without any discount, no not for poundage, the commonly practised of all the Offices at Court. It is tru upon this account I gave occasion to an outcry against my selfe, in former reigns where the payment was so uncertain things were bought in that Office at double or treble the price, when they had no hope of being paid in manny years: but I thought it not reasonable, that the Queen, who paid punctually,

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should pay excessively. I thought the Queens great consumption and ready payments was favour enough ; but I never payd my own bills at her Cost. In the Privy purse the greatest enemies I have do confess I was an extraordinary manager and tho that is an office subject to no account yet I am ready to offer my accounts of it to the strictest canvassing ; for I began with a happy thought, as if I had forseen what has happened since ; I have the Queens hand for all the money that she called for so far was I from selling the Queens favour or cheating her in any sort, I did all I could to discover the cheats of others but was never so much charged with any my selfe. I have heard it much objected to me that I waited so seldome on the Queen and was so little about her and because this is so contrary to the practise of all favourites I shall give a particular account of it. Soon after my marriage when our affairs were so narrow that a good degree of frugality was necessary, *Ld Marlborough tho his Inclination lay enough that way*, yet by reason of an indulgent gentleness that is natural to him he could not manage matters so as was convenient for our Circumstances, this obliged me to enter into the management of my family. I likewise thought I owed a great deal of care to the education of my children and besides this I had some friends, who I loved very well and in whose company I was well pleased to pass away some hours. I was sure I neglected no opertunity of doing the Queen all possible service and was never out the way, when there was any occasion for me. I had so satisfied the Queen before she came to the Crown, that she left me to my own liberty in this particular. After she came to the Crown, if I had changed my way, it would have looked as if I had been besieging or mistrusting her ; I love liberty in every thing so I could not resolve to abridge my selfe of it, and since I knew I was serving the Queen with a most upright fidelity and zeal in which it was not possible for me to alter, I did not apprehend that any thing could have wrought the change I have felt in the Queen and for the putting persons of an assured Confidence, as my spies about her, as I had never any such thought so in case I should have had it, whom could I have thought more proper for that than the very person that has supplanted me. If I had brought her in with the view of having one whom I had reason to believe true to me to have watched the Queen for me, I should have been very uneasy under the disappointment, but having brought her in meerly on the account of friendship and compassion without any other views I am the less concerned in that which was all her own fault, and had

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no excuse from any practise of mine, upon her I have but one thing more to reflect on, that has been objected to me, both by some friends and many Enemies that I was very inaccessible, and oft denied, and that we did not live in the splendor and openness that other favorites had done but when it is considered how many importunate suitors the credit I had with the Queen must have brought on me and that I knew those who desired pensions could not succeed for the L Godolphin had laid before the Queen a measure for pensions which he hoped she would not exceed during the Warre it was no wonder if I studied to avoid giving the deniall to many suitors. And having children whom both L Marlborough and I loved very tenderly it was naturall for us to desire to be easy in our house with our Children and a few friends and both L Marlborough and I agreed perfectly in that to abhorre a great open table with a promiscuous mixture of all sorts of people and the E. of Godolphin. who was so united to us both in friendship and alliance that he was much with us hated the dining with such a rout about us as much as we did [crossed out in Duchess's copy]. I was very ready to serve all persons in distresse and had true merit and just pretensions, but it was impossible to hear all complaints and to serve all, but I could not bring my selfe to hear, or to promise, what I did not intend to perform. I have now touched in generall many things which will help the reader to apprehend better the relation I am to give of the use I made of the favour I had so long enjoied, the steps in which, and the persons by whose practises I lost it, will appear in the narrative I am to give. I will only conclude this sort of preface to it with some reflections on all that has happned to me. It is an unspeakable comfort to me when I consider the Sincerity, and *true affection* with which I served the Queen and the just freedome I used with her. She had often charged me to do it and had as often promised never to be offended at it but to love me the better for it. If I *had not loved her with a most tender concern*, I would have satisfied my selfe with doing what I thought was enough to quiet my own Conscience ; perhaps I was too eager and too pressing in things that went against the grain with the Queen, but in this I served no end, or designe of my own, I did it only to serve and to secure her: so that even suppose I may have carried this too farre, I have an unspeakable quiet in my own mind, when I reflect on all that is past, because I was true to friendship, and to sacred promises whereas if I had more politically gone on enjoying my private favour with the advantages of it, I should have hated my selfe, and lived in a

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perpetual fret, and constraint. Perhaps some will think I went too farre in opposition to the favour that I saw was gone from me to another, I do not deny that I had a great indignation, when I discovered so blank an ingratitude as I had met with from the person in the world whom I had obliged the most and had never once offended to give a handle to the injuries she did me. Had she been content with her private fortune I could have more easily born it but I confess it raised my Indignation to a greater height when I saw her put her selfe in Mr Harleys hands who after some years of too entire a confidence that both L. Marl. and L. Godolph. put in him was under mining them as much as my Cosen was under mining me and all this in so Criticall a time that the whole affairs of Europe depending upon England it was not possible to guesse what designs men could have that were then in a combination to overturn all that had been done in a course of so many years with such vast expense both of blood and trespasse. This raised my Spirits not a litle. It may perhaps seem not so prudent of me to insist so much on my lodgings at Kensington since I never made use of them, and certainly at any other time and to any other person I would not have stood so much upon it. If my friends think I was too earnest in this matter I forgive them that and every other censure, so long as they acknowledge me to have acted with an uncorrupted fidelity and a disinterested zeal in every thing that related to the Queen, and her people, to the Crown and to the Protestant Succession. If I was not cunning dextrous favourite yet I was a true and sincere one. If of late years I was less assiduous about the Queen it was because I found her so intirely changed from what she had once been to me, that I confess I could *neither bare it*, nor so much as disguise it, *but to the praise of vertue, sincerity and good Conscience*, I must say, I have so perfect a quiet in my own mind now, that the struggle is over that I cannot expresse it. I may have committed errors in it, I may have judged of others by my selfe, knowing that I could like none the worse, who I believed loved me because they used all du freedom with me, when I had encouraged them to it. But upon the whole I have a good Conscience within me, that supports me ; so that I am easy in my selfe and with relation to all other I am only sorry they have acted parts that the whole world could not have brought me to. *I am sorry for it and I heartily pray for them.* I will still go on in a course of integrity and truth for that will preserve me tho not in a Court, yet in the sight of that God who loves truth in the inward parts to whom I own with humble confidence [I] make my

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appeals for to him both the purity of my heart and the cleannes of my hands are well known. I will turn myself to him being now out of the dissipation of a Court of attendance and business. I will apply my selfe more and more to true Religion and not value my selfe upon the form and show of it without the power and effect of it upon my thoughts words and actions, nothing is hid from him, no false colours can deceive him and I am sure when I serve him with the zeal and affection with which I studied to serve the Queen under him he will never cast me off, nor forsake me nor suffer my Enemies to triumph over me with this I end my Introduction.

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II

SOME INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HISTORIANS FOR BEGINNING THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH'S HISTORY

[By Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Printed from the original
in the possession of Earl Spencer.]

I HAVE determined to give the Materials in my Possession to the Gentlemen that are to write the Duke of Marlborough's History. (They are Mr Glover and Mr Mallet.) For it will take a great deal of time only to sort the Papers and read them over. (And these Gentlemen are to finish it as soon as they can with the approbation of my Executors, and the Earl of Chesterfield.) I remember to have read somewhere a great Author that I would have imitated in this History of the Duke of Marlborough, beginning in the same Stile: I write the History of the Duke of Marlborough. And I would have it throughout in that Manner: For it will require no Flourishes to set it off, but short plain Facts. I believe it must in the common way say he was Sr Winstan Churchill's Son, a Gentleman of Dorsetshire. I don't know whether it is proper or necessary to add what I am going to write, tho' I think it a Merit, that Sr Winstan Churchill, his Father, had about £1000 a Year from his Father, who liked his Grand-Son better than his own Son, settled it upon him, that his Father could only enjoy it for his Life. But the Duke of Marlborough, when he was but eight & twenty, joined with his Father, who was in Debt, and let him sell his Estate. From the very Beginning of his Life he never Spent a Shilling beyond what his Income was. He began with the first Commission of an Ensign in the Army, and went on regularly thro' every Step of that Profession: and in King Charles the Second's time served in France under Marshal Turenne, from whom he learnt a great deal. And I think it is more Honour to rise from the lowest Step to the greatest, than, as the Fashion is now, to be Admirals without ever having seen Water but in a Bason, or to make Generals that never saw any Action of War, & only felt from the Generosity of their Temper that they were not to pursue a flying Enemy. As to the Duke of Marlborough's Manner of proceeding, you will find a full account in the Papers I shall give you, & likewise of all the Expences

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of Queen Anne's War. And you will easily compare the difference of the Expences for that War which was so successful, and the present War, directed by Men of great Knowledge & Generosity : which, tho the Publick pays the whole, they cannot with any Reason complain of it. The Duke of Marlborough had never any vanity, and therefore living so many years with great Employments, he left a great Estate : which was no Wonder he should do, since he lived long and never threw any Money away. And Mony was for many years at six per Cent. And I have heard him solemnly swear, when it was of no Signification to do it to me, that he never in the whole Reign of Queen Anne sold one Commission, Title, or anything to anybody when he had so much favour from Queen Anne. He had a great deal of Compassion in his Nature, and to those that he had been long acquainted with he gave Mony out of his Pocket to those that were poor, tho' they were not of his Opinion. I am living Witness of this : for I was directed by him to pay some Pensions when he was abroad, and have letters that prove the Truth of it from the Persons. When he left King James, which was with the greatest Regret imaginable, but he saw it was plain that King James could not be prevented any other way from establishing Popery and arbitrary Power to the Ruin of England. And I really believe he then thought that the Army would force the Prince of Orange to go back to Holland, when they had found some way to secure the Prince of Orange's Interest, & to have the Laws of England continued, which King James had so solemnly promised to do when he came to the Crown. Every thing that has happened since demonstrates that no King is to be trusted, and it is plain that if the Duke of Marlborough had had the same way of thinking that our present wise Ministers have he might have been anything that an ambitious Man could desire by assisting King James to settle Popery in England. I hope this History will be writ as soon as tis possible : for while I am living, I shall be able to answer any Question that they may have occasion to ask : for I would have no thing in it but what is the real Truth.

I have several very curious things in my Power to prove concerning the Behaviour of both Parties, Whigg and Tory after the Revolution. But I imagine it would be best to let all that drop, because I really cannot say which side is most infamous. I can't see much difference between them, both sides designing nothing but their own advantage. The Whiggs had this Advantage that their pretended Principle was for Liberty and the Good of their

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Country. The Tories was for Jure Divino by which I suppose they imagined they should have all the Power and Places of Advantage divided amongst themselves. But every Thing they did was very short of the great Performances from the great Parts & Honesty of my Lord Carteret and his Partner my Lord Bath.

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III

WILLIAM III's DIPLOMATIC INSTRUCTIONS TO MARLBOROUGH (1701)

[S.P., 104/69, ff. 152-155. Another copy is at Blenheim.]

*WILLIAM R.

Instructions to Our Right Trusty and Rt Wellbeloved Cousin & Councell [o]r John Earl of Marlborough, whom Wee have appointed to be Our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary at the Negotiations for the Peace of Europe, at the Hague or elsewhere.

Given at Our Court at Hampton Court the 26 Day of June 1701.
In the thirteenth Year of Our Reign.

Whereas Our Loyall & Dutifull Subjects the Commons in Parliam[en]t assembled, did some time since by their humble Address, pray that Wee would be pleased to enter into such Negotiations in Concert with the States Gen[era]ll of the United Provinces, & other Potentates, as may most effectually conduce to the mutual Safety of these Kingdomes, and the States Gen[era]ll, & the Preservation of the Peace of Europe, and that Wee promised them immediately to order Our Ministers abroad to enter into such Negotiations accordingly, and did thereupon to that Purpose send Instructions to Alexander Stanhope Esqr Our Envoy Extraordin[a]ry to the said States Gen[era]ll, and our Plenipotentiary for these Negotiations, & for the more Effectuall carrying on thereof, have now appointed you to be Our Amb[assador] Extraordin[a]ry & Plenipotentiary to that Purpose. You are therefore to enter forthwith into such Negotiations with the Ministers of France & Spaine and other Potentates at the Hague, in Concert with the Ministers of the States Gen[era]ll, in Order to obtain the Conditions following, & in all other Matters which the said States shall think necessary for their further security :

1. That the Most Christian King shall order all his Troops, that now are, or shall be in garrison in any of the Spanish Towns in the Netherlands, actually to retire from thence, so as the Same may be entirely evacuated of french Troops, within such Time as shall be agreed upon in the Treaty, & that he shall engage not to send any Forces into any of those Towns or Countries.

2. That no Troops but such as consist of Naturall borne Subjects

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of Spaine, or Germans continue in the Spanish Netherlands, except such Troops as are to be placed & remain in Cautionary Towns, mentioned in the next Article.

3. That for the better Security of Us, & the States Gen[era]ll, & quieting the Minds of Our People, there shall be delivered to Us & to the said States, Cautionary Towns, within such Time as shall be agreed by the Treaty, to be kept by Our Garrisons respectively, & none other, Viz. to Us the Towns of Newport & Ostend, & to the States Gen[era]ll the Town of Luxemburg, Namur and Mons, in the condition they now are, to be kept by Our Garrisons, and those of the said States respectively, during such time as shall be agreed upon, with a proviso that the same be done without Prejudice to the Rights and Revenues of Spaine.

4. That no Town or Countries belonging to the Spanish Netherlands, or any Ports whatever belonging to the Crown of Spaine, shall be exchanged with France, or any ways delivered up or put under the French Government.

5. That Our Subjects shall enjoy the same Liberties & Priviledges in all Parts of the Spanish Dominions as well by Sea as by Land, as they did at the time of the Death of the late King of Spaine, and in as ample Manner as the French or any other Nation does or shall do hereafter.

6. That the Emperor be invited to join in this Treaty, & that any other Princes & States who think fitt to unite for the Preservation of the Peace of Europe, may be admitted into the same.

7. And whereas the Commons in Parliament assembled, have, by their humble Address unanimously assured Us, that they will be ready on all Occasions to assist Us in supporting such Allyances as Wee shall think fitt to make, in Conjunction with the Emp[eror] & the States Gen[era]ll for the Preservation of the Liberties of Europe, the Prosperity and Peace of England, & for reducing the Exorbitant Power of France, you are therefore to Act in the Negotiations carrying on at the Hague, in Conjunction as well with the Ministers of the Emperor, as of the States Gen[era]ll, to the Purposes aforesaid, and you are to declare upon all fitting Occasions, as well to the french Ambass[ador] as others concerned, that Wee do insist, according to what has been proposed by Us & the States Gen[era]ll, that the Emp[eror] should have reasonable Satisfaction in his Pretensions, & that Our Intention is, not to separate from him, But Wee do not expect that the Emp[eror]'s Minister should be admitted at the Conference with the french Ambass[ado]r, since Hostilities are actually begun in Italy.

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8. It is not Our Intention to tye you up by the foregoing Instructions, as that you shall not Negotiate elsewhere then at the Hague, but you are at Liberty to enter into Negotiations for the Ends aforesaid, in any other Place that shall be thought proper for that Purpose.

9. You are to give a free Communication of these your Instructions, and such others as you shall receive from Us, and of all Proceedings on this Subject to the Pensioner, & desire a reciprocall Communication from him as a Matter for Our Service.

10. You shall Observe such further Instructions & Directions, on this Subject, as you shall from time to time receive from Us, or one of our Principall Secretaries of State, with whom you shall constantly correspond and transmitt to him an Account of all Matters which shall happen in the Course of your Negotiation & of all Occasions of Moment that shall come to your Knowledge.

W. R.

WILLIAM R.

Instructions for our Right Trusty and Rt Wellbeloved Cousin & Councell[o]r John Earl of Marlborough, whom Wee have appointed to our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary, for treating and concluding an Allyance between Us, the Emperor, the States Gen[era]ll of the United Provinces, & such other Princes as are willing to enter into the Same for Secureing the Peace & Liberty of Europe. Given at Our Court at Hampton Court the 26 Day of June 1701 in the 13th year of Our Reign.

Whereas Wee have thought fit in Pursuance of the Advice of Our Parliam[en]t, to appoint You to be Our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary for making Such Allyances in Conjunction with the Emp[ero]r & the States Gen[era]ll, as are necessary for preserving the Liberties of Europe, the Prosperity of England, & reducing the Exorbitant Power of France, Wee think it necessary to give you the following Instructions for your Directions and Guidance therein.

You shall repair to the Hague, or such other Place as shall be thought proper, & there conferr with the Ministers of the Emperor, the States Gen[era]ll, & such other Princes, as shall be sufficiently Authorized thereunto, about making such an Union & Allyance between Us, & the said Princes, as may be most conducing to the great Ends before mentioned.

In the first Place, Wee think it absolutely necessary that Consideration be had to the Security of the United Provinces, by the

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entire Removall of the french Forces out of the Spanish Netherlands, & by putting those Provinces into such a State that they may not disturb the Quiet of their Neighbours, nor be at the Disposall and under the Influence of France, and as may most Effectually provide for the Security of England & Holland, & the Common Interest of Christendome.

And the Emperor's Forces being entered into Italy, to procure Satisfaction in his Pretensions to the Succession of Spaine, you shall informe yourself of his Minister what are the Termes of Satisfaction he would particularly insist on, and give Us an Acc[oun]t thereof, upon which Wee will signify Our Pleasure to you for your Proceeding therein.

And as to any other Princes that are willing to enter into this Alliance, you shall receive what Proposals they have to make in Relation to their particular Interests & communicate the same to Us, for our farther Direction.

And Whereas Wee understand by Our Minister at Lisbon, that the King of Portugal has sent Instructions to his Envoy at the Hague, to join in such measure as may conduce to the Preservation of the Publick Peace, you shall informe yourself of the said Envoy, what it is the King of Portugall doe propose, and shall at the same time represent to him, how necessary it is that the King of Portugall shuld enter into Common Measures with Us, the Emperor and the States Gen[era]ll, as well for the Security & Advantage of his Owne Dominions as for supporting the Gen[era]ll Interests of Christendome.

And in the Treaties you shall make, particular Regard must be had to the security & improvement of the Trade of Our Kingdoms, for which you shall receive more particular Instructions, as matters come to be ripe for it.

You are to give a free Communication of these your Instructions, & such others as you shall receive from Us, & of all Proceedings on this Subject to the Pensioner of Holland, & desire a reciprocall Communication from him, as a Matter for Our Service.

You shall Observe such further Instructions & Directions on this Subject, as you shall from time to time receive from Us, or one of Our Principall Secretaries of State, with whom you shall constantly correspond and transmitt to him an Account of all Matters which shall happen in the Course of your Negotiations, & of all Occasions of Moment that shall come to your Knowledge.

W. R.

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¹ Abbreviations used in the footnotes are shown within square brackets in the bibliography. The dates indicate neither the first nor the current editions of works, but the editions consulted in writing this book. Dates in the footnotes are inserted on the same principle.

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